Dreiser Studies

ISSN 0896-6362

Volume 33, Number 1 Spring 2002

CONTENTS

Essays

Emily Rosenbaum,
Performance Anxiety in *Sister Carrie*: Theodore Dreiser, the Ashcan School, and Theater Audiences 3

Special Section: *Sister Carrie* in Translation

Introduction by Yoshinobu Hakutani 27

Renate von Bardeleben,
Same or Other: Reading the German-Language Translation of *Sister Carrie* 33

Daochao Jiang,
Sister Carrie and the Chinese Mentality 47

Kiyohiko Murayama,
The Hidden Polemics in *Sister Carrie* 56

Yolanda Astarita Patterson,
Caroline Meeber: A Liberated Manon Lescaut? 64

The First Three Paragraphs of *Sister Carrie* as They Appear in the English Originals and in Translation 70

Laura Raidonis Bates,
Play Review: *Sister Carrie* at The Indiana Repertory Theatre 76

Reviews

Sister Carrie, by Richard Lehan
Reviewed by Shawn St. Jean 82

Pagan Dreiser: Songs from American Mythology, by Shawn St. Jean
Reviewed by John Clendenning 84

News & Notes 88

Contributors 89

Announcing

The Third Annual Dreiser Essay Prize

The International Theodore Dreiser Society is pleased to announce the Third Annual Dreiser Essay Prize. The award is sponsored by the Dreiser Society and is given annually to the graduate student or untenured faculty member who submits the best previously unpublished essay on any aspect of the work of the American writer Theodore Dreiser.

Applicants may submit essays that consider any part of Dreiser's corpus or that connect his life or work to those of other writers or to his times. In addition to a cash award of $250, the winning essay will appear in *Dreiser Studies*, a refereed journal sponsored by the Society. Other worthy essays besides the winner will be considered for publication as well.

Essays should follow MLA style. Applicants should not identify themselves on the essay but should instead provide their names, addresses (including email address), and "Dreiser Essay Prize Competition" on a separate cover page. Submit *three* copies of the essay by August 1, 2002, to

Stephen Brennan, Chair
Dreiser Essay Prize Committee
Department of English
Louisiana State University in Shreveport
Shreveport, LA 71115
email: brennanlsus@aol.com
web: http://www.uncwil.edu/dreiser/studies.htm

Performance Anxiety in *Sister Carrie*: Theodore Dreiser, the Ashcan School, and Theater Audiences

Emily Rosenbaum
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

When the title character in Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* suggests that she and her sister celebrate her employment by a junket to the theater, Minnie is concerned. After all, Minnie's husband Sven frowns upon such frivolous expenditures. "I'd like to go," Carrie insists to her sister. "Let's you and me go" (24). Carrie's desire eventually weakens in the face of the Hansons' objections, and she sulkily goes to stand in the doorway. Sven wonders "how Carrie could contemplate such a course when she had so little, as yet, with which to do" (25).

Sven Hanson's reservations are not purely practical, and they underscore interrelated societal concerns about the theater that turn of the century painters depicted. Carrie, in insisting that she attend the theater, differentiates herself from the rest of the family. Moreover, she attempts to use the theater as a venue for homosocial bonding with Minnie, free of Sven's patriarchal control. This proposed outing is especially troubling given her economic situation; trips to the theater are reserved for those who can afford the luxury. By insisting upon leisure far above her station, Carrie not only isolates herself and attempts to elude masculine control; she also implies that she can rise freely from her lowly social position. In this scene, the theater is threatening to class and gender restrictions not because of the actors but because of the opportunities it provides its audience.

Dreiser recognizes how audiences evolve with a culture. Audience relations often reflect the level of communal relations within a society. As Herbert Blau argues, "How we think about an audience is a function of how we think about ourselves, social institutions, epistemological processes, what is knowable, what not, and how, if at all, we may accommodate the

Dreiser Studies • Spring 2002, Vol. 33, No. 1
© 2002 Dreiser Studies

urge for collective experience" (28).

It is no wonder, then, that so many American artists and writers, like Dreiser, have been fascinated with theater audiences, especially around the turn of the twentieth century when societal institutions were fraught with changes and tensions. To make sense of the theater was to begin to make sense of growing cities with their attendant loss of privacy and rapidly disintegrating class and gender distinctions, which is why the bourgeoisie were so anxious to control the theater and its audiences. For Robert Henri, William Glackens, Everett Shinn,[1] and Theodore Dreiser, the theater was an excellent venue for exploring and exposing urban tensions.

One of the most prominent tensions involved gender. At the turn of the twentieth century, the theater encapsulated men's increasing anxiety about their own masculinity, an increase partly due to a shifting conception of aggression. E. Anthony Rotundo explains that earlier in the century men understood that their aggression was an unavoidable evil that came with being self-made breadwinners. Women had become the keepers of virtue in a society in which men had to exercise a morally suspect competitiveness to get ahead. By the late nineteenth century, however, men had begun to describe aggression not only as a virtue but as a sign of virtuousness. Men replaced women as the moral arbiters because they believed their activity and aggression were the virtues that needed to be propagated in the new Social Darwinist economic jungle. "Competitiveness and aggression were exalted as ends in themselves," and leisure activities as well as ideals reflected this standard. "The contrast between men and women—sharp in the 1800s—blurred from 'opposite' to merely 'different' " (Rotundo 6), as women could adopt masculine traits if they strove to better themselves.

In such a cultural situation, the "feminized" theater was a threat to the supremacy of manhood, which had just regained its role as the keeper of virtue. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the museum theater had arisen as a space that could include middle-class women and children because it was not stigmatized as "theater," and so theatrical endeavors became more feminized (Allen 43–78). Now, as men like Theodore Roosevelt asserted the importance of rugged masculinity, the theater became dangerous to that virtue. Dreiser's representation of the theater in *Sister Carrie* recognizes that these gender concerns are intricately wound up in other significant social and economic changes at the turn of the century.

Scholars have long grappled with Dreiser's interest in the theater.[2] His theatrical themes are best understood as a part of his larger experience, which was greatly colored by the urban context in which he and the Ashcan artists worked. A brief examination of one of Dreiser's autobiographies will

help explain how his descriptions of the theater should be received. *Newspaper Days*, begun around 1916,[3] covers the period from approximately 1892 to 1895, when Dreiser worked as a reporter in Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and New York. The Dreiser writing *Newspaper Days* is far enough removed from the young cub reporter to ridicule his own early attitudes towards women and the theater, but the Dreiser who wrote *Sister Carrie* is neither the wide-eyed youth of 1892–1895 nor the jaded libertine of 1916, and so his attitudes toward the theater are in flux.

When Carrie gets a position in the chorus, the narrator exclaims of the theater, "Blessed be its wondrous reality. . . . People came to it in finery and carriages. . . . Oh, if she could only remain, how happy would be her days!" (280). To see here only Dreiser's mocking of Carrie's attitude would be to simplify matters because, despite the obvious exaggeration of the tone, the words reflect Dreiser's own earlier feelings. In *Newspaper Days*, he tells how he was taken with the idea of becoming a playwright: "To be considered a writer, a dramatist—even a possible dramatist—raised me in my own estimation greatly. . . . Something of the rumored wonder and charm of the lives of successful playwrights came to me, their studios, summer homes and the like" (161–62). Given his subsequent half-hearted, failed attempt to get his melodrama produced and his turn to fiction, it stands to reason that Dreiser's enthusiasm had mellowed somewhat by 1899. Nonetheless, while writing *Sister Carrie,* Dreiser certainly recalled his own dream of theater as a road to fame and prestige, even if he was somewhat more skeptical than he had been in his early twenties. He certainly mocks the popular play in which Carrie first performs, listing "the sorrowful demeanour, the tremolo music, the long, explanatory, cumulative addresses" as "the most sacred traditions of melodrama" (119). Yet he had once been "one of the worst" admirers of this kind of "sentiment and mush" (*Newspaper* 220). Dreiser himself must be included as among the objects of his ridicule.

Similarly, he is partially invested in the attitudes towards women evident in *Sister Carrie.* How is one to take the comment that "A lovely home is one of the flowers of the world" (63) given that ideal's complete failure within the Hurstwood home? The Dreiser of 1916 and beyond insults not only marriage but the society that encourages it: "Imagine a world dull enough to make a sacrament of marriage!" (*Newspaper* 402). Men are endangered as women go around enforcing such dullness. "Verily," Dreiser reports, "love is the bait and marriage the trap that lead to procreative slavery" (*Newspaper* 553). Women are the force behind that most bourgeois of institutions, marriage. Faced with the threat of women and the dull morality that he attributed to them, the Dreiser of 1894 was moving toward this more

jaded response. Yet he himself once greatly desired marriage. As Richard Lingeman notes, even though Dreiser "became a quivering wreck" (206) at the thought of a wedding, separation from his bride-to-be Sara Osborne White drove him to poetic raptures about their future wedded bless. "Love, my love," he wrote her after a visit in June 1898, "—idol of my life—oh thou living shrine of my devotion. . . . I am yours wholey [sic] unquestioning until death, forever" (qtd. in Lingeman 206). It would thus be a mistake to dismiss completely his praise of "the mystic chords which bind and thrill the heart" (*Carrie* 63). When he joins with Shinn, Sloan, and Glackens in commenting upon the relationship between urban life and the theater, he is neither wholly invested in the bourgeois male values that are so threatened nor wholly free of the novel's pervasive anxiety about dangerous female autonomy.

The Ashcan painters shed a great deal of light on Dreiser's work for several reasons. Like Dreiser, these artists met with resistance from an establishment that was not quite ready for their work. Moreover, their work was threatening to the bourgeoisie because it focused on realistic subjects from the lower walks of life, subjects they all found while working on newspapers. Most importantly, Dreiser was friendly with several of these artists around the time he wrote *Sister Carrie*. Glackens and Shinn were his "collaborators, colleagues, and friends" (Kwiatt, "Graphic" 130), and Shinn was probably one model for Eugene Witla in *The "Genius"* (Kwiatt, "Dreiser's *The 'Genius'* "). As Joseph J. Kwiat argues, "it was in [the Ashcan Artists'] depictions of the 'truths' of city life, the portrayal of its low characters and sections, the studies of its violence and brutality, the painter's power for recreating the sense of an epoch and the effect of an environment, that they most evidently influenced Dreiser" ("Graphic" 129). These artists' perceptions of the theater within the urban milieu both provide valuable context for *Sister Carrie* and elucidate Dreiser's own use of the theater.

Carrie's potential to be both audience and performer is a sign of the mobility available in the new urban life. It is not long before Sven's misgivings about the theater are justified. When Carrie moves from audience to performer, she becomes a display that isolates her and that threatens class and gender lines. Everett Shinn's 1908 *Revue* (fig. 1) shares the tensions inherent in Carrie's theatrical endeavors. Like Carrie on and off the stage, the performer is fully dressed in finery that does not clearly mark her class. Her fancy clothing is what a poor woman might wear to show off or what a wealthier woman might wear to mimic the mores of the working-class. What is clear, however, is that this woman is on sexual display. She is de-

liberately tantalizing the male viewer with her "leg business" as she lifts her skirt just enough to show off a well-shaped calf.[4] She looks down at her own leg, as taken with it as Carrie is with her own appearance. The musician is not paying attention to his music, as his eyes are also on the leg. The revue is an opportunity for one man and one women to revel in feminine sensuality.

Revue thus considers two important and interrelated issues for American realists at the beginning of the twentieth century. First, as the costumes show, class markers had blurred since Mary Cassatt painted highbrow opera audiences in the 1870s, and women's bodies in the theater encapsulated that ambiguity. Second, *Revue* shows a man having an individual experience viewing feminine sexuality. Not only were the markers that reassured bourgeois and upper-class men rapidly blurring, but the city was also leaving them isolated, facing urban life—and the threat of female and lower-class encroachment—as solitary individuals rather than as members of a community. *Sister Carrie* depicts an urban milieu different from any Americans had known before, and theater scenes like *Revue* demonstrate the deep anxiety inherent in that difference.

FIG. 1. Everett Shinn (1876–1953), *Revue*, 1908, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, 31.346.

ISOLATION AND AGGRESSIVE SENSUALITY

In Dreiser's novel, Carrie rises in importance when she appears in the newspaper, separated out from the rest of the chorus. The first time she gets her picture in the paper, she considers buying several copies but then realizes "there was no one she knew well enough to send them to." Despite her rising from the ranks of the chorus, "The metropolis is a cold place socially, and Carrie soon found that a little money brought her nothing" (324). As Dreiser notes, this is the time when stars were beginning to be idolized.[5] Success in Carrie's world is measured by standing out from the crowd, which makes her all the more lonely.

In this same chapter Dreiser replicates this social isolation within the theater audience. Carrie is noticed as a frowning Quaker by an audience that seems to be a communal group, for it "roved with its eyes about the stage and sighted her" smiling as one. But then Dreiser undercuts this communal experience as men fantasize a separate connection to Carrie: "The portly gentlemen in the front rows began to feel that she was a delicious little morsel. It was the kind of frown they would have loved to force away with kisses" (325–26). Carrie's male audience, like the chorus members, equate success with isolation; they want to be alone with her rather than relating to her as a group. The larger the group grows, the more each audience member isolates himself in his relationship with the performer. Carrie's audience is living the lonely life of the big city, with mass-marketed amusements substituting for communal entertainments, and Carrie's sensuality is the focus of each isolated gaze.

A similar dynamic operates in Robert Henri's 1910 *Salome* (fig. 2). There is no better example of dangerous feminine sexuality than Salome, whose sensual dancing so captivated her step-father Herod that he let her name her reward. She chose the head of John the Baptist and so became a warning to centuries of men about the dangers of feminine wiles.[6]

Henri's Salome, like Shinn's performer, thrusts her sensuality directly at the individual audience member. Salome is as much a theatrical performer as is Shinn's woman. In fact, Henri used the professional dancer Mademoiselle Voclezca as a model. While in *Revue*, the viewer is complicit with the musician in gazing upon feminine display, in Henri's *Salome*, the only viewer is the one in front of the painting at whom Salome looks down her upturned nose. There is no crowd in which to hide, so the male viewer must face alone the frighteningly direct sexual assault of this woman's gaze and body.

Though her sexuality is muted, in her first performance Carrie is as

FIG. 2. Robert Henri (1865–1929), *Salome*, 1909, oil on canvas, 77½ x 37 in., SN937. Museum Purchase, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, The State Art Museum of Florida.

threatening as Salome. She gains power over men, and the more isolating the performance, the more power she attains. She begins her acting career in an amateur production of a popular melodrama, Augustine Daly's *Under the Gaslight*, put on by Drouet and Hurstwood's Elks lodge. Though her sensuality is muted in her role as suffering *ingénue*, she wields as much power over men as Salome does, and the more isolated in fantasy she and her audience become the more power she attains. Paradoxically, however, without the audience's illusion of a personal connection, the artist's isolation is ineffective. At least two of the audience members—Drouet and Hurstwood—care about her. In fact, this performance approximates the kind of communal theatrical experience that was becoming rare in the cities. The audience consists largely of lodge brothers and their wives and friends, all gathered for the common purpose of raising money for the lodge. So when the performance gets off to a painfully amateurish start, the audience's "hope and uncritical good nature" restrain "that unrest which is the agony of failure" (132). Carrie is the most "hopeless" of the company as long as she is unaware of her fellow actors and of the presence of her lovers in the audience: "She seemed to be talking in her sleep." However, when Drouet comes backstage between scenes to encourage her, "Carrie revived a little under the drummer's electrical, nervous condition" (133). Once she has reestablished a connection with Drouet alone, she can exclude him and everyone else from her consciousness and give free rein to her private fantasies. For a brief moment, her isolation enables the audience to join in a communal experience, as it will later in her New York triumph. Hearing only "her own rumbling blood," she generates "radiating waves of feeling and sincerity . . . . The magic of passion, which will yet dissolve the world, was here at work" (135). The result is a "riveting of feeling" that dissolves audience and actor into a unity: "They moved as she moved. Their eyes were with her eyes." When the scene ends, Hurstwood is not alone in his realization that "he was seeing something extraordinarily good," for his reaction is "heightened for him by the applause of the audience" (135).

But this shared passion is short lived. In later scenes, the other actors become no more than "blocks[s] of wood" (139) to Carrie, and as she launches into an extended speech on the consoling power of a woman's undying love, her lovers become isolated in their own fantasies. "He would marry her, by George!" (139), Drouet resolves. "By the Lord," Hurstwood thinks in kind, "he would have that lovely girl if it took his all. . . . This should be the end of Drouet, and don't you forget it" (140). The earlier magical passion has been transformed into a personal jealousy that destroys communal feelings. And while Drouet's personal connection has enhanced

Carrie's performance, it does not lead to increased intimacy. Isolation leaves Drouet merely a helpless "fidgeting" (139) audience member whom, between acts, Carrie wishes she were rid of.

Carrie's isolation, on the other hand, is empowering. Her performance when she is alone on stage heightens Hurstwood's desire for her, as is evident in the moment she catches his eye as she awaits her flowers and realizes that "she was looking down, rather than up, to her lover." Meanwhile, Hurstwood, foreshadowing the amorous male audience members of Carrie's later success, "could have sold his soul to be with her alone" (141) though their very desire for connection is frustrated by the success that caused it. As in *Salome*, feminine performance usurps masculine authority precisely because it leaves men alone to deal with feminine appeal.

CLASS AND URBAN ISOLATION

Dreiser's metropolis is a lonely place, where only money and fame distinguish people. When Carrie arrives in New York and asks Hurstwood, "Where is the residence part?" he replies, "Everywhere" (213). There is no separate domestic area, and, despite the masses of people, Carrie can be tucked away for two years in her first apartment without being part of either a domestic or a commercial community. In this urban environment, high culture becomes a means by which the elite promote economic and social distinctions. As Lawrence Levine explains,

> The desire of the promoters of the new high culture to convert audiences into a collection of people reacting *individually* rather than collectively, was increasingly realized by the twentieth century. This was achieved partly by fragmenting and segregating audiences so that it was more and more difficult in the twentieth century to find the equivalent of the nineteenth-century theater audience that could serve as a microcosm of the entire society. (195)

This feeling of being alone in a large audience, like Carrie's general loneliness among the city's masses, was a result of the growing class stratification in the second half of the nineteenth century and the resultant promotion of distinctions among amusements. As those distinctions blurred, the isolation remained and class and gender anxiety increased, as is demonstrated in the work of realist writers and painters.

Nowhere was this change more deeply felt than in the theater.[7] Prior to 1770, theaters in the colonies were a microcosm of the patriarchy, with

separate seating for each social class. Women were excluded. Theaters built after the Revolutionary War, in a society seeking equality for all men, featured fewer of the expensive upper-class box seats and more of the cheaper lower-class gallery and pit seats. This republican reformation was short-lived, however, and by the 1800s, class tensions reemerged in the theater.[8] Theaters built in the 1820s once again had many box seats and were controlled by the upper class. The working-classes, who thought they had fought a revolution for equality, not for aristocracy, sometimes resisted the hierarchy. There were several resultant theater riots in major cities, the worst of which was the 1849 Astor Place Riot in New York.[9]

In the decades surrounding the Civil War, the United States saw a burgeoning middle class as industrialization fragmented the artisan class and drew many into the factories. As society became more segregated, separate theaters grew up to serve the different classes, which had once been forced to intermingle in the cities. The middle class wanted to be distinct from the working class but not from the elite, and theaters were designed to satisfy them. The Boston Theatre, built in 1854, is a good example:

> Only four private boxes remained, and the pit had been eliminated altogether. In effect, the Boston business class had erased distinctions between themselves and the older elite and had removed respectable workers, if they cared to attend at all, to the margins of the playhouse. Box-pit-and-gallery seating had organized the interiors of English and American playhouses since 1660. By 1860, however, a mere fifteen years after the changes began, most business-class auditoriums reflected these new class arrangements. (McConachie, "American Theatre" 164)

The workers marginalized in the new business-class theaters attended theaters of their own.

Theaters in the second half of the nineteenth century reflected the widening class distinctions not only in their architecture but in their entertainment as well. After the Civil War, new types of productions began to attract middle-class women, productions designed specifically not to offend drawing room values. When Dreiser's Carrie attends the theater with Mrs. Vance, she is viewing just such a play, "one of those drawing-room concoctions in which charmingly overdressed ladies suffer the pangs of love and jealousy amid gilded surroundings" (228). Lower-class entertainment, however, was still largely male dominated.

But, as Everett Shinn's 1906 *Theater Box* (fig. 3) demonstrates, by the turn of the century class distinctions were again breaking down within the

FIG. 3. Everett Shinn (1876–1953), *Theater Box*, 1906, oil on canvas, unframed: 16½ x 20⅛ in. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; gift of T. Edward Hanley, 1937.

theater, as they had following the Revolution. Shinn was not the first painter to be interested in the interaction between the audience and the performer. Edgar Degas and Mary Cassatt had portrayed spectators and the show at the same time. But whereas Degas and Cassatt painted only upper-class scenes, Shinn's *Theater Box* captures the class mingling that troubled American urban elites and was so evident in the theater.

The mingling involved gender as well as class. Before the Civil War, respectable women had not gone by themselves into public entertainments; after the war, when they began to, segregation of gender became a marker of class. To show she was middle class, a woman kept apart from both the lower classes and men, except for certain "legitimate" theatrical venues, like the museum theater. By 1890, however, bourgeois men and women were becoming frustrated with these separate spheres and were looking for ways to share leisure (Erenberg, "Hammerstein's"). Increasingly, the theater was marketed to a mass audience. Although the elite still laid claim to

highbrow entertainment like grand opera and the symphony, the middle and lower classes were mixing at lowbrow entertainments. More disturbing yet, middle-class women were now going to the same theatrical productions as lower-class men.

This new situation is quite evident in Shinn's *Theater Box*, which creates a triangle between the wealthy spectator, the female performer, and the lower-class majority of the audience. Women mix with men, and no one is making eye contact with anyone else. This new theater in which all the classes mingle, unmarked, does not represent the unified society reflected in early American theaters; rather, it is a collection of disconnected strangers, much like the men in Carrie's audiences, who represent the fragmented urban life that Carrie experiences.

The blurring of clear class lines had not relieved the isolation created by earlier class segregation. As both Alan Trachtenberg and Lawrence Levine have argued, in the last half of the nineteenth century, the upper-class substituted "culture" for the community that the working class once had. This hand-me-down culture was a poor substitute, Trachtenberg argues, because it made people more passive. In addition, in the 1870s through the 1890s, the newspaper and the circus, among other forms of represented experience, encouraged people to have the identical experience of city living but have it individually. "Viewing and looking at representations, words and images," Trachtenberg writes, "city people found themselves addressed more often as passive spectators than as active participants, consumers of images and sensations produced by others" (122). As the lack of eye contact in *Theater Box* demonstrates, people alienated from communities and social classes may all occupy the same space, but they do not connect.

Carrie's rise underscores how class markers were no longer reliable. Carrie's social movement is complicated. She goes from a member of the "middle American class" (2), to a "wage-seeker" (13), to a factory worker, to a possible prostitute (at least in her sister's mind) (10), to Drouet's mistress, to an amateur actress, to Hurstwood's lover, to wage-seeker again when Drouet leaves, to Hurstwood's middle-class "wife," to middle class again, to an impoverished drudge, to a chorus girl, and then to a star. A change in role often means a change of place, and Dreiser continually points out the number of rooms in which Carrie lives as a sort of chart of her economic progress. Her clothing certainly indicates this progress as well, but since her social rise is inversely proportional to her descent in relation to conventional morality, her clothing is not at all a reliable marker of her moral status.[11] Even Carrie recognizes this, despite her obsession with clothing: "She looked into her glass and saw a prettier Carrie than she had

seen before; she looked into her mind, a mirror prepared of her own and the world's opinions, and saw a worse" (70). Many of the changes in her moral and economic status are masked not only by her clothing and housing arrangements but by an elaborate sequence of last names—Meeber, Drouet, Madenda, and Wheeler. Each change of identity serves to isolate her from her past, enabling her to represent herself as she chooses in a world that can no longer tell the prostitute from the respectable woman.

Blurring class distinctions had serious ramifications for what was performed in the theater, where, as in other venues for "culture," class became a matter of taste. In part, *Sister Carrie* shows the clash between highbrow and lowbrow entertainment that emerged as different theaters aimed to attract different classes and that intensified as theaters tried to please mass audiences. Levine asserts that the middle class bought into the system of "culture" because it validated them and associated them with their betters. The lower classes were not kept out of institutions of culture, but they were allowed in only to the degree that they accepted upper-class values. This did not mean, Levine asserts, that the elite wanted to mix with those to whom they were dispensing culture: "It is important to recognize the degree of tension in this relationship, which led the arbiters of culture on the one hand to insulate themselves from the masses in order to promote and preserve pure culture, and on the other to reach out to the masses and sow the seeds of culture among them in order to ensure civilized order" (206). A scene such as that represented in *Theater Box* is dangerous because the only visible distinction between the classes is the box seating that greater wealth affords the woman. Wealthy theatergoers who attend the same shows as the masses are undercutting their pretension to higher culture. By 1901, audiences could be defined not just as high, middle, and lower class, but as highbrow and lowbrow. Even as the first set of distinctions was endangered, the elite asserted the second set all the more stridently in the face of possible extinction. "More and more," Levine argues, "culture seemed to be a life raft in an unpredictable and turbulent sea" (203). The more the life raft drifted on the "tossing, thoughtless sea" (*Carrie* 8) of the new city, the more the upper class shouted their protest into the storm.[12]

Dreiser illustrates the tension between a class based on wealth and a class based on culture in Carrie's first meeting with Ames, during both the pre-theater dinner and the show itself. At the fashionable Sherry's, she is impressed by "that exhibition of showy, wasteful, and unwholesome gastronomy as practised by wealthy Americans, which is the wonder and astonishment of true culture and dignity the world over" (234). In this uniquely American context, the only qualification for entrance is the ability to pay,

and the clientele is limited to "the moneyed or pleasure-loving class" (233). As in *Theater Box*, the distinction is not one of "true culture and dignity," a true appreciation of the elegant, but rather one of ability to pay for the right to be showy. Dreiser underscores the difference between those two methods of classification when the well dressed Carrie envisions "the other Carrie—poor, hungry, drifting at her wits' ends, and all Chicago a cold and closed world, from which she only wandered because she could not find work" (234). This moment highlights Carrie's class mobility in a society based on wealth, not "culture." In the same scene that Dreiser transports "the other Carrie" into Sherry's, he also brings up the Hurstwood of "former days" (235), who would have fit right into this bastion of bought status. But by bringing up Carrie the wandering job seeker, Dreiser also foreshadows Hurstwood's later descent into the working class. This scene, then, portrays the porousness of an upper crust based solely upon wealth.

Dreiser contrasts the wealth-based system with a "culture"-based one through Ames, who deliberately eschews the trappings of wealth. When he declares, "I shouldn't care to be rich" (237), Carrie is puzzled, as money is the only measure of status she understands. Ames's dismissal of one system of values is coupled with his espousal of another, one in which books that are "very much talked about" do not "amount to much" (236). When he returns to New York a few years later, he will get Carrie to read *Pere Goriot*, which is so "strong" that "she caught nearly the full sympathetic significance" (363) of its attack on the amoral scramble for place and power in Balzac's Paris. Ames, who has often been criticized as a thinly veiled spokesman for Dreiser's own social and aesthetic beliefs, thus seems to be promoting the anti-elitist values characteristic of realists like Howells, James, and Garland in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In fact, in sounding "[t]he old call of the ideal" (354), he is speaking for a new highbrow art grounded in the appreciation of democratic "genius" (356) rather than in money and the sort of crass "newspaper fame" (354) Carrie has won.[13] Carrie's response to Ames during this first encounter illustrates that his method of classification has little influence in a society where wealth turns class lines fluid. Although she admires him, putting him in a class "she had vaguely come to think of as scholars" (236), she actually does not change her viewpoint at all. True to her pattern, she compares him to Hurstwood and Drouet, labeling him "wiser . . . saner and brighter" (237). Any difference Carrie perceives she translates into one of degree, not one of kind. Thus, when Ames qualifies his support of actresses by saying he admires only "good" ones, Carrie does not truly comprehend. Even years later, after she becomes a star, when he proclaims her play "very

good . . . for a comedy" (354), she only partly understands. She knows that he means "her comedy success was little or nothing," but his warnings about losing her talent to act make her feel only "slightly guilty of neglect" (356–57). All that these encounters with Ames bring her is a warm admiration in the moment and a heightened loneliness in the aftermath. In a society that allows people to buy their sense of superiority, all he does is increase our awareness of the transience of human connectedness.

Shinn's *Theater Box* depicts a further threat to hierarchy that Dreiser also recognizes. A woman is performing on stage, and a wealthier woman has come to engage in that display of feminine sexuality, cutting men out of the equation. Carrie is similarly attracted to another woman when she attends a play. She is taken with the entire theater world, but especially with "one beautiful actress" whose grace "had won [her] heart" (229). Carrie desires both the other woman and the chance to play the role that would make her desired herself.[14] As she sits dreaming, Hurstwood comes home, and she is irritated that he gets in the way of her fantasized connection to the beautiful actress. Dreiser marks this moment as one of the first instances of Carrie's renewed dissatisfaction. Women attending the theater without men are threatening to male supremacy because if women can desire one another like this they do not really need men.

UP ON THE ROOF

Carrie's first big break comes when she is playing in a summer production at the Casino,[15] which during the summer produced light entertainment for patrons who would stroll about the roof garden during breaks from the performance. The roof gardens were particularly representative of the class and gender changes described above, especially in later years when these gardens became theaters with full productions of their own. The roof gardens began as anything but welcoming to lowbrow comedies like the one Carrie acts in. As Stephen Burge Johnson explains, Rudolf Aronson built the first one atop the Casino in 1882, imagining it to be the perfect home for the summer garden concerts he had enjoyed in Europe (1–5). That was a short-lived dream, and long before 1895, when Carrie performs at the Casino, the proprietors of the several new roof gardens had realized they needed to appeal to a wider audience than highbrow concerts could draw. Commercial reality interfered in art.

William Glackens's 1901 *Hammerstein's Roof Garden* (fig. 4) illustrates these concerns, which are also the concerns of Shinn, Henri, and Dreiser: unclear social markers, urban isolation, and the threat to male con-

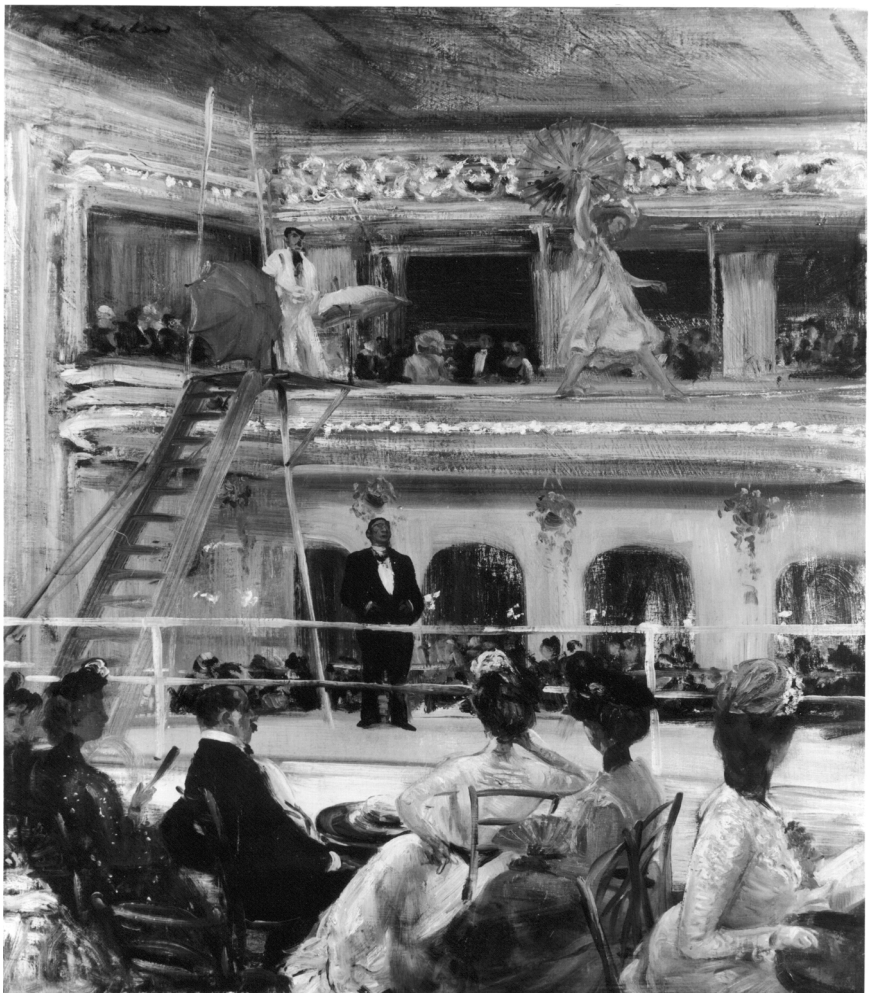


FIG. 4. William J. Glackens (1870–1938), *Hammerstein's Roof Garden*, ca. 1901, oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase 53.46

trol. The painting is of the last and longest running of Oscar Hammerstein's roof gardens, the Paradise, atop the Victoria Theatre. The act is a young woman on a tightrope as her partner watches from the safety of the platform.[16] Glackens's audience is in two groups—those in the background occupying floor and gallery seats, and five women and a man in the foreground in chairs around tables. Glacken's characteristic realism extends to

the urban tensions so evident in the changing theater. The women in the audience are of unclear social status. As Louis Erenberg points out, "Glackens makes it difficult to tell whether the women in the audience are part of a large party or whether they are unescorted, whether they are prostitutes, young matrons, or shopgirls" ("Hammerstein's" 131). The woman in white to the left is probably with the man, as they both appear to be seated at the same table. The positioning of all the other women is ambiguous. The middle woman in white might be with the central couple, but her chair is pushed back. The borders of the painting cut off any male companion the other women might have.

Glackens's ambiguity about whether the women are escorted reflects an ambiguity in male companionship itself. Working-class women who could not afford to attend the theater often had to be "treated" by men in exchange for sexual favors, becoming "charity girls" or "occasional prostitutes."[17] A male escort, formerly a sign of respectability, could mean just the opposite, as it does for Carrie. When she is an unescorted wage seeker and factory girl, with her virtue intact, she is taken to be fair game for lewd gazes and sexual advances. Once the move from her sister's house makes her moral status questionable, she falls under the protection of Drouet, who "did not leave her much alone" (58). On the night of her sexual surrender, she and Drouet are preparing to stroll to a good restaurant before seeing the "hilariously popular" (59) opera *The Mikado*. When the wintry scene outside her window makes her think of home, Carrie "wrung her little hands" with some sorrow she cannot name, though unconscious guilt is likely at work. On the way to dinner, she is startled to meet the glance of one of the girls from the shoe factory. The "shabby" working girl turns to stare, making Carrie, in her new finery, feel "as if some great tide had rolled between them." Carrie can afford to attend the theater because of Drouet, but she is no longer as innocent as she was in Wisconsin for precisely the same reason, and the escort is certainly not a reliable marker of her respectability. She remains more like the envious working girl than she knows. The "spectacle" of *The Mikado* stirs "vain imaginings about place and power," and afterwards "the clatter and the throng of fine ladies made her stare." However, in their expensive clothes, Carrie and Drouet are indistinguishable from the "ladies and gentlemen . . . moving in a social crush" (60) after the performance. From all appearances, Carrie is a perfectly respectable middle-class woman being escorted home by her handsome husband, not a one-time factory girl with "no excellent home principles" on the way to be bedded by a small-time drummer.

The feminine attire in both *Sister Carrie* and *Hammerstein's Roof*

Garden further clouds moral and social distinctions. The visible lines between prostitute and respectable woman, like class lines, were seriously compromised in the early years of the twentieth century. While respectable women were once marked by their clothing, despite poverty, "In the promiscuous spaces of the streets, theaters, and dance halls, prostitutes provided a cultural model both fascinating and forbidden to other young working-class women" (Peiss 66). The term "prostitute" was often applied to any woman who openly displayed her sexuality. Such women were quite publicly visible in the streets for the first time, and even respectable middle-class women were emulating their dress (Allen 119–56). Fashions, like male escorts, were no longer clear markers of class or respectability.

Because of Glackens's loose brushwork in *Hammerstein's Roof Garden*, the women's clothing is not very clear. Three women are in white, indicating they have the money to keep that kind of clothing clean,[18] but that raises the question of how they came by that money, as well as the money to attend the show. In contrast to their tightly-fitting tops and voluminous skirts, the entertainer wears a loose-fitting dress with fluid lines that reveals much of her legs. Such a dress, without the restrictive undergarments needed for the other dresses in the picture, flows and clings as the woman moves, offering glimpses of the female form. The three central female audience members are watching a display of lower-class feminine sexuality, and their own class and moral status is ambiguous.

This sort of ambiguity was surely difficult for the upper classes, especially the men, who relied on women to be what they seemed. Women could pass for what they were not, as is evident when Carrie accompanies Mrs. Vance to Broadway, where men and women of all walks of life go "purposely to see and be seen" (227). Carrie, the fallen woman, believes that the illegal wedding ceremony in Montreal has made her as respectable as Mrs. Vance, and there is nothing in her outward appearance to indicate otherwise. She is "ogled and stared at" not because her slightly less modish clothes signify her sexual availability but because she is mingling in "fashion's crowd," where prostitute, maiden, and matron require close scrutiny to be told apart. Carrie herself at first sees only an undifferentiated "lovely company" swarming past. She can recognize "the sprinkling of goodness and the heavy percentage of vice" among the women only by observing "[t]he rouged and powdered cheeks and lips, the scented hair, the large, misty, and languorous eye" (227) of the vicious. The men who "looked too often into conscious eyes" are obviously hoping to meet the "languorous eye" of a woman on the make, such intimate connection being the only sure means of recognizing a prospective conquest. A woman signi-

fies her goodness by means of an unwritten gestural code, as Mrs. Vance does when she "stiffened under the gaze of handsome men and elegantly dressed ladies, whose glances were not modified by any rules of propriety." With such a simple adjustment of attitude, vice would become indistinguishable from virtue. This trip down Broadway and *Hammerstein's Roof Garden* reinforce Blau's point that the tensions in the theater represent tensions in society. Inside the theater and out, the city has become a world of make believe in which the class lines that had been maintained for a few decades by growing urban isolation were disappearing from view.

If Glackens's women watching a display of feminine sexuality are free of male control, they resemble the Carrie who visits the theater with Mrs. Vance and then immediately needs Hurstwood less. Whether or not the women have escorts, this is a female-dominated scene. The three men clearly form a decentered triangle of performer, master of ceremonies, and businessman in the audience. The most threatening element of the painting is that the three primary female audience members, who all have their heads turned to look at the woman on the high wire, do not seem to care that the men are there.[19] The lines of the performers' bare legs extend down to the leg of the woman on the left and to the bosom of the woman on the right, forming an erotic triangle. This triangle is much larger and wider than the men's, and it excludes them entirely. Regardless of whether men have accompanied them, these women have formed an all-female society of spectatorship.

Glackens's theater scene, then, demonstrates what Carrie learns at the end of Dreiser's novel: not only can women survive without men but the theater can help them to create female-only relationships. In her early days in the chorus, Carrie strikes up a friendship with Lola Osborne, who shows her the ins and outs of the theater world and thereby, like Mrs. Vance, increases her dissatisfaction with Hurstwood. On one occasion, Lola talks her into letting two "awful nice boys" take them out for a drive in the park and dinner, but experience has brought "the least touch of cynicism" (292) to Carrie's attitude towards men. Eventually, Carrie moves in with Lola, and even though she shares Lola's "love for a good time" (323), she is bored by the shallow, egotistical youths who try to seduce her. Once she has become a star, she is "incited . . . to coolness and indifference" (333) by mash notes from millionaires, and her "lonely, self-withdrawing temper" makes her "an interesting figure in the public eye" (355). Not even Ames, her long-time ideal, can stir more than a temporary dissatisfaction with the triviality of her success. On the night Hurstwood trudges through the snow towards his lonely death in the Bowery flophouse, Carrie and Lola are snugly settled in

their rooms at the Waldorf trying to decide whether to take a coach to the theater. Such a homosocial relationship between self-supporting women, like the one in Glackens' painting, reflects tensions within the larger society. George Chauncey explains that as more and more women challenged conventional expectations for women, men increasingly began to question their own roles. In particular,

> The declining marriage and birth rates of the native-born middle class and the general movement of women into men's sphere alarmed many men. Joe L. Dubbert has argued that a 'masculinity crisis' developed in the years 1880–1920 because of the challenge posed to masculine sex-role definitions by both the women's movement and men's perception that women exerted undue influence over key cultural and socializing institutions. (103)

When Dreiser's Hurstwood has fallen almost to his lowest point and is staggering around Manhattan hungry and cold, he looks up to see Carrie's face and name above him "blazing, in incandescent fire" (362). Glackens, too, shows the theater moving women literally over men, with the tightrope walker the highest figure in the painting, higher even than her partner waiting off to the side. For men in 1901, this was a frightening prospect.

Both Glackens and Dreiser present the theater as a place for feminine advancement. Shinn and Henri also show the extent to which female power is connected to a larger breakdown of class and cultural hegemony. Wealthy men who were trying to promote themselves as the keepers of aggressive virtue were faced with women and lower classes that refused to accept a bourgeois, male-dominated ethos. In a society that increasingly isolated people from one another, the rise of single individuals could not be controlled by hierarchical norms and class unity. Rather, the culture of the second half of the nineteenth century expanded, leaving each man and woman to fend for him or herself in a world where boundaries were blurred and social markers were unclear at best. The theater, for Dreiser and the Ashcan artists, became representative of the looming social forces threatening middle-class male power in turn-of-the-century urban America.

Notes

1. Henri, Glackens, and Shinn called themselves The Eight, along with John Sloan, George Luks, Ernest Lawson, Charles Prendergast, and Arthur Davies. They are also commonly referred to as The Ashcan School, although The Eight and The

Ashcan School are not completely synonymous.

2. For example, Ellen Moers roots Dreiser's fascination with the theater and performance in his family connections, particularly his brother, Paul Dresser, who she claims impressed and embarrassed Dreiser. Dreiser, she argues, portrays the theater as a place with great potential for growth and change—especially for females—but also as a place of danger, particularly for Hurstwood with his scheming and playacting nature. Hugh Witemeyer argues that Dreiser uses the theater to reflect the psychological states of his characters; every time the theater comes up, it is to reflect upon some psychological process of a character. Witemeyer equates Carrie's wide-eyed excitement about the theater with Dreiser's early reaction to the city and Broadway.

3. In 1916 or 1917, he began work on the second volume of his autobiography, which was finally published, in greatly expurgated form, in 1922 as *A Book About Myself*. This volume has since been republished, with many of Dreiser's original notes and passages restored, as the Pennsylvania edition of *Newspaper Days*, Dreiser's preferred title for the work.

4. Robert C. Allen discusses "leg business" at length, explaining that the erotic display of the female leg became more central to burlesque as women turned from speaking performers to silent objects of display. The bourgeoisie thus neutralized part of the threat of such bold female sensuality by taking away women's controversial voice. Carrie's display is much less risqué but is of a similar kind.

5. McConachie states that the star system developed earlier, in the middle of the nineteenth century ("American Theatre" 122), but Dreiser is writing particularly about the physical image of the performer that, through the photograph, made the stars even more distinct from the rest of the company.

6. Henri was not the first to paint Salome. Henri Regnault, for example, painted Salome in 1870. Henri's *Salome* has an especially interesting history. It was rejected for a 1910 National Academy of Design exhibition, even though Henri was an academician and the subject had previously been portrayed in all sorts of venues (Zurier, Snyder, and Mecklenburg).

7. The theater history in this section comes from two sources. Some factual information is from Richard Butsch's collection *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption*, both his introduction (3–27) and Bruce A. McConachie's "Pacifying American Theatrical Audiences, 1820–1900" (47–70). Most information is from Bruce McConachie's "American Theatre in Context, from the Beginnings to 1870."

8. McConachie explains that "by 1800 most Americans viewed the playhouse as a legitimate arena for the clash of political factions" ("American Theatre" 132).

9. This riot was instigated by competing performances of Shakespeare, with the upper classes favoring the British actor William Charles Macready and the

lower classes supporting the American Edwin Forrest.

10. Minnie seems to think Carrie went off in perfect innocence but "she doesn't know what she has done" in leaving (57). Minnie's subsequent dreams about Carrie indicate that she knows Carrie left in a spirit of adventure, but that spirit is a slippery slope towards iniquity (61–2).

11. Philip Fisher argues that everyone in *Sister Carrie* is playing some part in order to sell, and the better the salesman, the less important the product. Unlike Rousseau, Dreiser does not judge this process. He shows everything to be a part of the show of identity, hence the constantly changing clothes and hotels (162–69).

12. Levine explains that just as the terms were coming into use, "highbrow" became a term of derision for those who would not join in with the mass-marketed entertainments (235).

13. For a discussion of realism as an extension of rather than an attack on New England high literary culture, see Nancy Glazener, *Reading for Realism: The History of a U.S. Literary Institution, 1850–1910* (Durham: Duke UP, 1997).

14. Deborah M. Garfield argues that, in *Sister Carrie,* to view as a spectator is to long to perform on a stage. In her view, to perform in some way, to be costumed and lit, is to engage in life, and the characters desire that performance, sham that it is, over the obscurity of being a part of the throng.

15. The summer of 1895 saw two plays at the Casino, *Apollo* and *The Grand Duchess* (Johnson 13).

16. The rooftop gardens found this kind of act particularly appropriate for their poor acoustics because vaudeville was marked more by spectacle than by important dialogue, which more "legitimate" theater with a cohesive plot would have (Johnson 27).

17. Kathy Peiss explores this situation in depth in *Cheap Amusements*.

18. See Philippe Perrot's *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie*, which describes the difficulty of keeping white clothing clean and the rise of white clothing as a status symbol among bourgeoisie eager to demonstrate their capacity to spend on luxuries. Perrot focuses on French fashion, which is certainly not interchangeable with American fashion, but the difficulty of keeping white clean was not limited geographically.

19. Louis Erenberg writes, "While the women in the audience gaze with interest at the performer, the stolid 'tired businessman' seems to look nowhere in particular. He has seen it all before; apparently the women have not, and they seem to be looking for something" ("Hammerstein's" 131). Men had been engaged in taking in feminine sexual display for quite some time, but for women in the painting this is a new experience.

Works Cited

Allen, Robert C. *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1991.

Blau, Herbert. *The Audience*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1990.

Butsch, Richard, ed. *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1990.

Chauncey, George, Jr. "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: The Changing Medical Conceptualization of Female 'Deviance.' " *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*. Ed. Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989. 87–117.

Dreiser, Theodore. *Newspaper Days*. Ed. T.D. Nostwich. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1991.

——. *Sister Carrie*. Ed. Donald Pizer. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1991.

Erenberg, Louis. "Hammerstein's Roof Garden." *Frames of Reference: Looking at American Art, 1900–1950*. Ed. Beth Venn and Adam D. Weinberg. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999. 130–32.

——. *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890–1930*. Westport: Greenwood, 1981.

Fisher, Philip. *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel*. New York, Oxford UP, 1985.

Garfield, Deborah M. "Taking a Part: Actor and Audience in Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*." *American Literary Realism* 16 (1983): 223–39.

Glackens, Ira. *William Glackens and the Eight: The Artists Who Freed America*. New York: Horizon, 1957.

Johnson, Stephen Burge. *The Roof Gardens of Broadway Theatres, 1883–1942*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1985.

Kwiat, Joseph J. "Dreiser and the Graphic Artist." *American Quarterly* 3 (1951): 127–141.

——. "Dreiser's *The 'Genius'* and Everett Shinn, the 'Ash-Can' Painter." *PMLA* 67 (1952): 15–31.

Levine, Lawrence. *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988.

Lingeman, Richard. *Theodore Dreiser: At the Gates of the City, 1871–1907*. New York: Putnam, 1986.

McConachie, Bruce A. "American Theatre in Context, from the Beginnings to 1870." *The Cambridge History of American Theatre. Volume One: Beginnings to 1870*. Ed. Don B. Wilmeth and Christopher Bigsby. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. 111–81.

——. "Pacifying American Theatrical Audiences, 1820–1900." Butsch 47–70.

——. " 'The Theatre of the Mob': Apocalyptic Melodrama and Preindustrial Riots in Antebellum New York." *Theatre for Working-Class Audiences in the United States, 1830–1980*. Ed. Bruce A. McConachie and Daniel Friedman. Westport: Greenwood, 1985. 17–46.

Moers, Ellen. *Two Dreisers*. New York: Viking. 1969.

Peiss, Kathy. *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1986.

Perlman, Bennard B. *The Immortal Eight: American Painting from Eakins to the Armory Show, 1870–1913*. Westport: North Light, 1979.

Perrot, Philippe. *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*. Trans. Richard Bienvenu. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994.

Rotundo, E. Anthony. *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*. New York: Basic, 1993.

Snyder, Robert W. "Big Time, Small Time, All Around the Town: New York Vaudeville in the Early Twentieth Century." Butsch 118-35.

——. *The Voice of the City: Vaudeville and Popular Culture in New York*. 1989. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000.

Stansell, Christine. *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century*. New York: Metropolitan, 2000.

——. *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789–1860*. New York: Knopf, 1986.

Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

Weintraub, Laural. "Women as Urban Spectators in John Sloan's Early Work." *American Art* [Smithsonian] 15.2 (2001): 72–83.

Witemeyer, Hugh. "Gaslight and Magic Lamp in *Sister Carrie*." *PMLA* 86 (1971): 236–40.

Zurier, Rebecca, Robert W. Snyder, and Virginia M. Mecklenburg. *Metropolitan Lives*. New York: National Museum of American Art and W.W. Norton, 1995. 19–20.

Sister Carrie in Translation

Introduction by Yoshinobu Hakutani, Kent State University

On November 9–11, 2000, the International Theodore Dreiser Society held the "*Sister Carrie* Turns 100" conference at the University of Pennsylvania's Van Pelt-Dietrich Library in Philadelphia. The first session, "*Sister Carrie* in Translation," was devoted to five papers, four of which are here presented in expanded form. (The fifth, Stanislav Kolář's "The Czech Reception of *Sister Carrie*," was published in the spring 2001 issue of *Dreiser Studies*.) As moderator of the session I had asked each presenter to read the first three paragraphs of the 1900 Doubleday, Page edition of *Sister Carrie*, as translated into German, Chinese, Czech, Japanese, and French, respectively, though at the session I learned that the French translation (1996) is based on the Pennsylvania edition (1981). I had also asked the presenters to comment on the history of the translation—the problems and issues encountered in producing them as well as their reception.

That the translation of a literary text is an imperfect art is shown in Renate von Bardeleben's "Same or Other: Reading the German-Language Translation of *Sister Carrie*." After World War II the original 1929 German *Schwester Carrie* was modernized by replacing, for example, Austrian words with "more modern and regionally neutral language." Despite such efforts, German readers today consider its style outdated. Unfortunately, Anna Nussbaum, the original translator, was unfamiliar with such phrases as "Bowery hall," "Cook County politicians," and "Single Tax," those well-known representations of American culture, society, and politics. In 1929 Dreiser wrote Nussbaum, "If there are any other phrases about which you are at all doubtful, please let me know and I shall endeavor to make them perfectly clear to you" (qtd. in Bardeleben). Unduly faithful to individual words without their cultural contexts, Nussbaum often failed to render English words in proper German equivalents; at times she replaced an English word with an improper German coinage. She tried to create a fluent German

© 2002 Dreiser Studies

text that was also faithful to the English original, but the distortion inherent in translation and what Bardeleben calls "violence" did occur. Nussbaum's effort, in Lawrence Venuti's words, "to bring back a cultural other as the same" (qtd. in Bardeleben) was a formidable task.

While there remains only a single German translation of *Sister Carrie*, Daochao Jiang notes that eight Chinese translations have appeared since 1976. Chinese critics have considered Dreiser's depiction of American life to be truthful, objective, and realistic. They have also approved of *Sister Carrie* as "an outspoken criticism of American capitalism." But Chinese readers, in whom Confucian philosophy is deeply ingrained, react negatively to the portrayal of family and gender in *Sister Carrie*. The Chinese reader may unconsciously be mindful of Confucius's precept that a male and a female child over seven years of age shall not occupy the same seat or that children shall not travel far from home while their parents are alive. Confucius also instructs that the father, the head of a family, is more important than the state but that the family is more important than the father. For without a family, as the contemporary Chinese critic Lin Yutang explains, the father "has no real existence" (qtd. in Jiang). Chinese readers view Carrie as an amoral, even immoral, woman, not the naturalistic victim of social environment critics have usually characterized her as being. The Chinese text of *Sister Carrie*, Jiang demonstrates, reveals not only the differences in syntax and semantics between the two languages but also those philosophical, cultural, and political concepts that are embedded in what Noam Chomsky calls the "deep structure" of the text.

Japanese Dreiser criticism began in the thirties, when the eminent critic Hideo Kobayashi, who is still read today, termed Dreiser's style inept. After a critical hiatus caused by the disruptions of World War II, Junichiro Tanizaki, a giant among twentieth-century Japanese novelists who is best known in the west for *The Makioka Sisters* (1943–48), glorified the beauty of Dreiser's style in *An American Tragedy*.[1] Notwithstanding Tanizaki's affinity for Dreiser's writing, until recently most Japanese readers have uncritically accepted the unfavorable response to Dreiser presented by such 1950s critics as Lionel Trilling. However, neither of the two translations of *Sister Carrie* available in the fifties is even an adequate rendition of the novel. The first translation was what Murayama calls "a rush job" by a well-known Shakespeare scholar; the other was an abridged version published when the film *Carrie*, featuring Jennifer Jones and Laurence Olivier, was released in Japan in 1955. Only with Murayama's own 1997 translation has a carefully prepared and complete text become available in Japanese.

Unlike the early Japanese renderings of *Sister Carrie*, Jeanne-Marie

Santraud's French translation (1996), based on the Pennsylvania edition, reflects the translator's sympathy with Carrie. The adjective "timid," for example, is translated into "réservée" ("reserved"), implying, as Yolanda Astarita Patterson notes, that Carrie "is wise enough to hold back and observe what is happening around her before plunging into any brash commitments but is quite capable of making decisions about how she will live her life." Santraud's French translation also makes city life brighter than that in the original and, like Murayama's Japanese translation, renders Dreiser's style robust and imagistic.[2] The French text of *Sister Carrie*, moreover, was influenced by such French feminist criticism as Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). By the turn of the twentieth century, as Patterson observes, Dreiser could no longer attribute to fallen Carrie "the despair of Gustave Flaubert's insatiably romantic Emma Bovary"; instead, he created a gifted modernist woman determined to survive and thrive independently of her lovers.

The first Czech translation of *Sister Carrie* (1931), as Stanislav Kolář shows, is marred by inaccuracies. The English word "lunch" in the first paragraph, for instance, is rendered as "*snídane*" ("breakfast"), since lunch in what was then Czechoslovakia is similar to dinner in America ("Czech Reception"). Kolář would have used "*svacinka*" to mean "lunch" ("*Sister Carrie* in Czech"). The 1931 translation also tends to use archaic words and at times leaves out entire sentences in complex passages, resulting in clumsiness. The second Czech translation (1957) deletes chapter headings, entitles the novel *Sestřička Carrie*, and includes more contemporary expressions. Like Dreiser's other works, *Sister Carrie* was well received in the Czechoslovakia of the Great Depression, for high unemployment, inflation, and poverty enabled readers to feel compassion for Hurstwood in his downward spiral. Bohumil Novák, however, while praising Dreiser's realistic observations of life, was not impressed with the "conventional and well-trodden paths of the European realist novel" (qtd. in Kolář, "Czech Reception" 58). Otakar Vočadlo, a highly influential Czech critic, regarded Dreiser's prose as "rather clumsy" and pointed out numerous "formal weaknesses" such as the use of clichés, the lack of subtlety, and the superficial drawing of upper-class life. Still, to Vočadlo Dreiser was a great pioneer of literary naturalism blazing a trail for a younger generation of American writers like Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis, the first American recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature.

Translation, being an imperfect art, inevitably distorts the original text. Despite the fact that one reviewer praised the 1953 revised German translation for its "sober, unpathetic, matter-of-fact . . . fresh" style, many errors

remain from Anna Nussbaum's 1929 translation. As Bardeleben shows, Nussbaum renders Dreiser's "smoke stacks" as "patches of smoke" and his "native intelligence" as "inborn cunning." The Czech *Sestřička Carrie* (1957) also distorts some meanings. The Czech diminutive "*sestřička*," as Kolář remarks, reflects the emotional attitude of the translator, as well as of the narrator, toward Carrie. While the word is somewhat appropriate to the earlier chapters, in which Carrie is portrayed as "a little, insignificant and helpless girl lost in the big city," it is also partly ironic because in Czech it implies innocence and virtue. Later in the story, as Carrie's fortunes rise with her gain in worldly wisdom and loss of conventional virtue, the Czech title becomes even more ironic.

While some distortions obviously mar a translation, those faithful to the reader's cultural background may enhance comprehension. The Chinese translation of *Sister Carrie*, as Jiang shows, is a case in point. Comparing the two contemporary cultures as reflected in their respective languages, Jiang observes, "Americans tend to be more direct, more open minded, and more efficient than Chinese." American directness and efficiency are evident in the title of the first chapter, "THE MAGNET ATTRACTING: A WAIF AMID FORCES." Earlier generations of Chinese would likely have responded well to such constructions, for classic Chinese prose thrived on simplicity of expression, concreteness of imagery, and economy of syntax. However, since 1949, the Chinese Communist Government has discouraged the classic style. Contemporary Chinese sentences, in fact, tend to be longer and more complex than in the past. Perhaps because Chinese readers are unaccustomed to compressed constructions, the translator renders Dreiser's chapter title in two complete sentences: "The Attraction of the Metropolis Is Just Like the Magnet, The Sister From the Countryside Is Homeless and Helpless." But Chinese culture still values the concrete image, as evidenced by the government's acceptance of Chinese characters, which Ezra Pound had earlier recognized as representing physical objects.[3] In the first paragraph of *Sister Carrie*, the original abstract "at parting" is rendered in Chinese as "when she left home," a particular action by a particular person. Moreover, "home" in Chinese, as in any language, is a concrete image with rich emotional associations. To the extent that it is more syntactically complex and more emotionally evocative than the original, the translation makes Dreiser's fictional world more comprehensible to Chinese readers.

Distortions caused by translation can not only strengthen the reader's understanding but, more importantly, further an author's intention. For one thing, Dreiser clearly intended readers to experience his characters' subjectivity as directly as possible. That is why his "objective storytelling" in the

first paragraph of *Sister Carrie*, as Murayama remarks, changes in the second to "the subjective free indirect speech" of Carrie and why key scenes throughout the novel are colored by the subjectivity of both characters and narrator. At times, translators take this subjectivity further than Dreiser himself has. As Patterson points out in relation to the French translation of the Pennsylvania edition, rendering the first paragraph's "It was in August, 1889" as "On était en août 1889" ("One was / We were in August 1889") makes both narrator and reader "more directly involved in what is happening to Carrie" in the French text than in the original. Translating Dreiser's obsolete "What pray is a few hours—a hundred miles?" in the second paragraph into "Dites-moi, que sont quelque heures, cent miles?" ("Tell me, what are a few hours, a hundred miles?") also makes the narrative voice more personal and subjective. In translating the parallel passage in the Doubleday, Page edition, Murayama renders Dreiser's "What, pray, is a few hours—a few hundred miles?" as the contemporary colloquial Japanese "Suujikan—nisan byaku mairu no tabi nanka, taishita koto wa nai ja nai no" ("Just a few hours' ride—only a few hundred miles—that doesn't matter, does it hon?"). In Japanese sentences like this one, Murayama notes, a feminine accent, a feminine manner of speaking, sounds more clearly than it does in Dreiser's original.

Although distortion and misrepresentation of surface structures inevitably occur during the act of translation, mistakes in rendering Dreiser's "smoke stacks" as "patches of smoke" or his "lunch" as "breakfast" have a negligible effect on readers' experience. What matters most in translating *Sister Carrie*, or perhaps any realistic modernist work of fiction, is the convincing representation of human subjectivity. A translation of *Sister Carrie* succeeds as long as it is faithful to the original text's deep structure, to the thoughts and feelings of Carrie and Hurstwood as they are intertwined with those of Dreiser. As Murayama notes, Carrie, Hurstwood, and the narrator "frequently address themselves to each other and even to some unnamed addressee." The story thus unfolds in the dialogic consciousness of a Dostoevskian narrator[4] rather than in the monologic consciousness of a Jamesian narrator. Any future translator of *Sister Carrie* must convey not only Dreiser's worldview but his technique for rendering subjectivity.

Notes

1. Readers in Japan and abroad regard Tanizaki (1896–1965), a realistic modernist in the vein of D. H. Lawrence, as a novelist interested in sensualism and aestheticism, but Tanizaki is also known for his refined prose style reminiscent of classical Japanese fiction. His lifelong fascination with *The Tale of Genji* must have

developed a keen desire for the purification and further enrichment of modern Japanese prose.

2. As Ezra Pound explains in his essay "Vorticism," the image is not a static, rational idea but "a radiant node or cluster," or "a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing" (469–70). Pound also defines the image as "impressionism . . . it may be even be very good prose . . . endowed with energy" ("Imagisme" 349). Another important tenet of imagism calls for directness in expression: the immediate model for this principle was nineteenth-century French prose. For further discussion, see my "Ezra Pound, Yone Noguchi, and Imagism."

3. In 1919, impressed by Ernest Fenellosa's writings, Pound edited Fenellosa's "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium of Poetry," reprinted in Pound's *Instigations*. Pound was fascinated with the concrete image of a Chinese character. In reading Chinese, one is not attending to a mere "juggling [of] mental counters," but is "watching *things* work out their fate." When the Chinese write "Man sees horse . . . the Chinese method follows natural suggestion. First stands the man on his two legs. Second, his eye moves through space: a bold figure represented by running legs under an eye, a modified picture of an eye a modified picture of running legs but unforgettable once you have seen it. Third stands the horse on his four legs" (363).

4. Murayama suggests that subjectivity in *Sister Carrie* is expressed by what Mikhail Bakhtin calls dialogism, the "hidden polemic" in clashing styles. As Dostoevskian narrative is "*multi-accented* and contradictory in its values" (Bakhtin, qtd. in Murayama), *Sister Carrie* is foregrounded in the popular culture, social discourse, and journalism of the American 1890s, the kinds of fictional material that are "polyphonic," "styleless," "clumsy," and yet vibrant.

Works Cited

Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. New York: Doubleday, Page, 1900.

——. *Sister Carrie*. Ed. James L. W. West III, et al. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1981.

Hakutani, Yoshinobu. "Ezra Pound, Yone Noguchi, and Imagism." *Modern Philology* 90.1 (1992): 46–69.

Kolář, Stanislav. "The Czech Reception of *Sister Carrie*." *Dreiser Studies* 32.1 (2001): 56–63.

——. "*Sister Carrie* in Czech Translation" (unpublished).

Pound, Ezra. "As for Imagisme." *New Age* 14 (1915): 349.

——. *Instigations of Ezra Pound, Together with an Essay on the Chinese Written Character*, by Ernest Fenollosa. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920.

——. "Vorticism." *Fortnightly Review*, n. s., no. 573 (September 1914): 461–71.

Same or Other: Reading the German-Language Translation of *Sister Carrie*

Renate von Bardeleben
Johannes Gutenberg-Universitaet Mainz

Dreiser had long held hopes of having his works translated into the German language. After the success of *An American Tragedy*, he therefore acted promptly when publishers abroad showed interest in negotiating for the rights to his books. His second voyage to Europe in 1926 was above all a celebrity tour to further the publishing and other media sector's interest in him. As we can gather from his European diary of 1926, he was screening translators as he went along. Dissatisfied with the character of the translators in Berlin,[1] he went on to Vienna, where he interviewed three candidates, Dr. Arthur Rundt, Marianne von Schön, and Dr. Anna Nussbaum. He was displeased with Rundt. "He does not look sufficiently intelligent," he noted in his diary.[2] He was impressed with Schön's knowledge of American letters, while he found Nussbaum disappointingly ignorant of his work. In an entry in his diary of August 26 he describes the future translator of *Sister Carrie*:

> Back to hotel where I find "[sic] Dr. Prof. Anna Nussbaum—a Jewess & socialist connected with Der Tag—& also the socialist administration of the city. What she knows about my work is nothing. Has only been reading French notices of me. Wants me to send books so that she can write studies of me for the socialists.

These translators were competing for the right to translate Dreiser's works and tried to approach him in various ways. In a May 11, 1928, letter to Dreiser, Arthur Rundt recalled Dreiser's walk with him in the Prater in 1926 and asked for a second meeting in New York, presumably still hoping for a translation opportunity. Dreiser evidently turned him down for a second time. Marianne von Schön, whom Dreiser favored[3] and who was to

Dreiser Studies • Spring 2002, Vol. 33, No. 1
© 2002 Dreiser Studies

translate most of Dreiser's work, had contacted Harper and Brothers in April 1926 for Dreiser's address, announcing that she was interested in translating *The Genius*.[4] At their first meeting Dreiser suggested that she try her hand at *An American Tragedy*; on September 16 she told him that she was "perfectly delighted with it" and "must find a publisher for it," since a meeting with Paul Zsolnay that she had "half planned" had not come about.[5]

Anna Nussbaum had sent a letter to Dreiser on June 28, 1926, introducing herself as a literary critic who intended to write a review of Dreiser's books. Without specifically mentioning her own interest as a translator, she inquired about which of his books had not yet been rendered into German. Four days after meeting Dreiser, she wrote again, asking him to send her *A Hoosier Holiday*, *A Book About Myself*, *A Traveler at Forty*, *An American Tragedy*, *The Hand of the Potter*, and Burton Rascoe's *Theodore Dreiser*. Two months later she informed him that her article on *An American Tragedy* was to appear in *Abend,* and she sent him a copy of it on December 2. In a letter of January 1, 1927, she was still urging Dreiser to send his books and also reminded him of her interest in translating one of his works, preferably *A Book About Myself*, *A Traveler at Forty,* or *A Hoosier Holiday.* It was in this letter that she claimed, "I think I was the first to speak to Zsolnay about you." This claim was later explicitly confirmed by the publishing house: "Frau Dr. Anna Nussbaum . . . was the first person who, years ago, tried to have your books published in German with us."[6]

Nussbaum's German translation of *Sister Carrie* was published by Zsolnay on May 6, 1929, after the success of the German versions of *An American Tragedy* in 1927 and of *Jennie Gerhardt* and *The Titan* in 1928.[7] Although a newcomer to the market, Zsolnay had quickly become the most important publishing house in Austria and had also entered the German market by opening branch offices in Berlin and Hamburg. The firm had been founded in Vienna in 1923 by Paul von Zsolnay, a Hungarian nobleman of Czech nationality from a Jewish family but of Protestant faith, and originally a farmer and gardening expert by profession. When he began his firm, he had accumulated enough funds for the publishing venture, but he had no practical knowledge whatever of the publishing business. The firm adopted a new socialist concept of sharing profits with its authors. It also differed from other German-language publishers because it had a markedly higher proportion of non-German writers—at times the translated works averaged almost half of its production. Theodore Dreiser was the first American author and the second English-language writer chosen by Zsolnay, following the then tremendously popular English writer John Galsworthy and preceding Sinclair Lewis and Edith Wharton, who were first

published by the firm in 1930 and in 1931 respectively. Zsolnay's policy was to bargain for the translation rights to the complete works of an author. Through negotiations by Grethlein & Co. in 1927 (Hall 255), Dreiser had entered into such a general agreement.[8] The publisher's strategy had clear advantages for marketing and advertising campaigns. The firm prided itself on its special mission to publish "the best literature of different nationalities" (Hall 64), and notwithstanding later quarrels Dreiser fared well with this firm.[9] It is a striking fact that during the short period between 1927 and 1932 more books by Dreiser were translated into German and printed in greater numbers than in any other language. This was mainly due to the efforts of Paul Zsolnay, the publisher, and Felix Costa, his general manager, together with the special English department of the firm. By August 1931, 6,675 copies of *Schwester Carrie* had been sold, earning Dreiser 4,068.18 Austrian shillings, or about $573.[10] In compliance with his contract, Dreiser received 10% royalty for the first 3,000 copies and 12½% for the next 4,000 to 20,000 copies, i.e. A.S. 0.52 ($0.073) and A.S. 0.6825 ($0.096) per copy respectively. The total amount due by June 9, 1931, was A.S. 49,760.86 ($7,009.07). The production charts for 1932 list 2,949 copies of *Sister Carrie* (Hall 217). The overall figure for the years 1927 to 1935 for all Dreiser books sold by Zsolnay is 175,000 (Hall 270).

The disastrous political developments in Germany during the 1930s threatened Zsolnay Verlag and also harmed Dreiser. In 1934 the firm was branded as a "Judenverlag," or "jüdischer Verlag" (a "Jewish publishing house") by the Nazi regime (Hall 11, 18).[11] Its owner, Paul Zsolnay, its general manager, Felix Costa, as well as some of its major authors such as Franz Werfel and Max Brod were of Jewish descent; many, such as Heinrich Mann, were on the political left or were open critics of the National Socialists. Dreiser was blacklisted as early as 1935, since he was thought to have Jewish ancestors and was said to have campaigned against Germany (Hall 271). Despite the remonstrations of his legal adviser for Europe, Dr. Eugen Kerpel, a Budapest lawyer who emphasized that Dreiser was not Jewish, the Propaganda Department in Berlin turned a deaf ear to the publisher's plea for a "special permission" and repeated the claim that Dreiser was Jewish in a letter of June 6, 1940.[12]

Despite Dreiser's and the publisher's efforts, the ban on his books was not revoked. After America formally entered the war on December 11, 1941, the ban was reinforced by the general prohibition of books by authors of enemy countries, a fate Dreiser shared with such writers as Sinclair Lewis and Pearl S. Buck. In June 1946, Paul Zsolnay returned from England, where he had emigrated in 1938,[13] once again took over business, and

immediately began to reissue his established authors, foremost among them Dreiser.[14] In 1949 *Sister Carrie* was actually the first of Dreiser's works in German translation to go back into print. To date *Schwester Carrie* boasts an astonishingly high number of editions and reprints with different publishers and book clubs in Germany and Austria, second only to *Eine Amerikanische Tragödie* in popularity.[15] However, the novel has been recently out of print for almost a decade, though it is still easily available in many secondhand bookstores.[16]

It has been the good fortune of *Schwester Carrie* that the translation was checked and reworked before it was reissued after the war. Thus in spite of its origin at the end of the twenties, the revised translation does not strike the reader as belonging to that particular period. Some of the stylistic characteristics of the earlier period as well as some Austrian terms have been removed in favor of more modern and regionally neutral language.[17] The positive effect has been confirmed by an opinion poll among readers of our time. The survey was conducted in October 2000 with a mixed group of undergraduate and graduate students (ages ranging between 19 and 27) and another group of faculty members (aged between 30 and 70) at the School for Applied Linguistics and Cultural Studies, which specializes in the training of translators and interpreters, at Germersheim.[18] The overall impression of the translation on the majority of readers, i.e. those over 30 years of age, is that of a book which is not locked in time and which is still pleasant to read. However, a second evaluation revealed that the present generation of students believes that, while the book still reads well and poses no obvious difficulties in understanding, its style is clearly dated. The reaction of the young generation, who are representatives of modern Germany, emphasizes the need after half a century for a further revision of *Schwester Carrie* or, preferably, a completely new translation. New concepts of translatology might produce a more unified, homogeneous text based on a consistent strategy of decision-making.

Dreiser's first German audience in the twenties consisted of people who had been avid readers of Upton Sinclair and who were accustomed to a sociological bias in American fiction.[19] This orientation continued after the Second World War, when Dreiser's *Schwester Carrie* was a favorite with both eastern and western German audiences. A review essay of 1973 blandly states:

> Theodore Dreiser is a popular writer in the German Democratic Republic. Some of his books have seen several printings—*Eine Amerikanische Tragödie* more than twelve, *Schwester Carrie* at least seven and *Der Financier* more than five. Almost every year

a book of his is being published. . . .[20]

Apparently the initial reception of the novel had not been significantly harmed by problems in the translation. However, Dreiser states that a German critic reported several instances of adverse criticism to him. This critic was probably Herman George Scheffauer at Berlin, who was Dreiser's literary agent for the German-speaking market and who himself had tried his hand at translating *The Titan*.[21] Fearing for the success of his novel, since the translation might be "a deterrent rather than anything else," Dreiser reacted immediately and complained in a August 26, 1929, letter to Paul Zsolnay Verlag that he was "in receipt of a letter from a German critic in Berlin telling me that the recent translation of Sister Carrie as done by Dr. Anna Nussbaum has been attacked very severely by the German critics," and that it "must have been indeed a sorry job to provoke such critical comment."[22] Still citing this third party, Dreiser then blamed the "deficient" translation on the publisher's parsimonious business policies: "There are quite a few very good English translators here in Germany, but they are more expensive than the ladies which are generally preferred by the publishers." Costa hurried to assure him that "the German critic whom you quoted seems to exaggerate when saying that the translation of Frau Dr. Nussbaum has been severely attacked." Admitting that the *Berliner Lokalanzeiger*, the *Berliner Börsencourier,* and *Berlin am Morgen* had not been satisfied, Costa then quoted some leading German newspapers such as *Vossische Zeitung* and *Berliner Tageblatt* which had not objected to the translation, and *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, which called the translation "good and adequate." He quoted the *Berliner Börsencourier* as being aware of the special difficulties of the book: "Certainly a novel discribing [sic] a time as difficult to define as the period about 1890 is very difficult to translate."[23] In a previous letter, however, the publisher had already promised to follow Dreiser's suggestions for his future translators.[24]

As the record in the Vienna and Philadelphia archives proves, the Austrian translator had been confronted with numerous seemingly insurmountable difficulties in the text. On January 8, 1929, a desperate Anna Nussbaum sent a letter to Dreiser systematically listing 36 questions which demonstrate that she was not sufficiently familiar with the particulars of American culture and that she obviously lacked a sound knowledge of American jargon of the late 19th century. She inquires about the meaning of "Bowery hall," "Elks," "Custer Lodge," "Cook County politicians" and "Single Tax." The vocabulary items range from such period terms as "drummer," "masher," "duffer," "dado book shelves," and "free ice fund" to typical Americanisms like "hornswaggled," "Black-face," "bunco-steerer," and

"ward politician" and slang terms like "corking," "lug" "pardner," and "rubber." Dreiser apparently discussed very patiently all these points with his secretary,[25] who painstakingly drafted a meticulous answer. The reply encouraged Nussbaum to come forth with six more questions which were likewise carefully answered. The reply proves that Dreiser, for his part, was anxious to give whatever assistance might be needed, telling Nussbaum, "If there are any other phrases about which you are at all doubtful, please let me know and I shall endeavor to make them perfectly clear to you."[26]

A comparison of the first and the revised translations with the Doubleday, Page edition of *Sister Carrie* reveals many errors that have never been corrected. From a long list I have chosen only a few striking examples which illustrate the different types of mistakes and the problems. For each example, I have given the English original, then the German:[27]

1) German words with the wrong meaning:
   "a small trunk" – "Köfferchen" (5) (a small suitcase)
   "grip" – "Handtasche" (9) (a purse/pocketbook)
   "shade lowered" – "Lampenschirm herunterziehen" (9) (to lower a lampshade instead of the window shade)
   "smoke stacks" – "Rauchschwaden" (12) (patches of smoke)
   "families of labourers and clerks" – "Arbeiter- und Beamtenfamilien" (14) ("clerks" rendered as civil servants)
2) Regionally restricted usage (Austrian expressions):
   "train shed" – "Perrondach" (13) (should be "Bahnhofshalle")
3) Passages that sound "translated" or strange, since they were not translated idiomatically, or that contain words which were newly fashioned and which are not part of average German usage or have a different connotation in the German language:
   "fat purse" – "fette Brieftasche" (10) (should be "dicke Brieftasche" since "fett" is mainly used for a person or an animal)
   "native intelligence" – "eingeborene Klugheit" (6) (which sounds like "inborn cunning")
   "huge interests" – "gewaltige Besitzungen" (19) (rendered as landed property, "huge domains." The German word suggests an agrarian background instead of the spread of capitalism and industrialism described in this passage by Dreiser.)
4) Mistranslations due to a lack of cultural knowledge:
   "two-story frame houses" – "zweistöckige Blockhäuser" (12) (rendered as two-story "loghouses")
   "Order of Elks" – "Elch-Vereinigung" (8) (does not immediately suggest the fraternal order, but rather a group of animals)

> "Besuchen wir Montag die McVickars?" (85) (creates the misleading impression that Mrs. Hurstwood wants to see some friends named McVickars. A reference to the theater requires a change of article—"das McVickars." Evidently, in chapter 11, the translator was not yet aware of the true meaning of the reference, while in chapter 12 the reference to the McVickars is understood and rendered as "McVickar-Theater" [sic] [109].)

At first glance all these failures do not seem to hurt the text substantially, and the reading does not seem to have been seriously hampered. Readers undoubtedly can follow the course of the events. But because of these constant irritants, they will sense the text as being somehow "alien," if not "strange," and, more importantly, in these odd spots will not fully grasp the author's meaning. When Minnie is said to live in a neighborhood of "labourers and clerks," the German text does not convey the impression of a poor, drab neighborhood, since the translation for "clerks" by "Beamte," that is civil servants, suggests a different and definitely more well-to-do section of society than Dreiser meant to portray. "Rauchschwaden" for "smoke stacks" creates an image of smoke curling high up in the air and sounds rather romantic. Dreiser, however, wished to prepare the reader for a naturalistic scene of factories directly in opposition to the idyllic small-town world with its flour mill that Carrie had left behind when parting from her home. Owing to the mistranslations this abrupt change is lost on the reader of the German version. I quote from one person who tested the translation and commented, "The German text has a charm of its own." One only wonders, however, whether this is the charm Dreiser had intended.

The revised version eliminates some of the stylistic failures and lexical problems of the original translation of 1929, such as unknown expressions and puzzling incomplete sentences, and frequently replaces them with idiomatic phrases and more elegantly structured sentences. Gone are such abrupt, abortive sentences without a verb as "Die große, durch die täglich verkehrenden Züge nähergerückte Stadt" on the opening page (1929: 7). Revised, the sentence now reads much more fluently and is closer to Dreiser's style: "Und da gab es auch die große Stadt, die durch diese täglich verkehrenden Züge doch viel näher gerückt wurde" ("There was the great city, bound more closely by these very trains which came up daily") (1953: 5). The puzzling "Realitätenfirma" (1929: 107) for "real estate firm" has been corrected to read "Grundstücksagentur" (1953: 84). The "familiar green environs," translated first as "das liebvertraute Grün" (1929: 7), which has a kitschy ring, is rendered, less sentimental and less redundant, as

"das vertraute Grün" (1953: 5). The "next stop" is no longer "die nächste Haltestelle" (1929: 7), a term suggesting a streetcar, but "die nächste Station" (1953: 5), the proper term for a railroad stopping point. Several regional (Austrian) terms are removed: "Erdäpfel" (1929: 76), for potatoes, is replaced by "Kartoffel" (1953: 59); the laughable "Beköstigungsbeamte" (1929: 75), for "officer of the board," becomes the well-known "Oberkellner" (1953: 59). The partial translation "Elk-Vereinigung" (1929: 10) becomes a full translation, "Elch-Vereinigung" (1953: 8); thus the latter term appears less foreign but still remains unintelligible and enigmatic for the average reader. The word-by-word translation of "girlhood and home" as "Mädchenzeit und ihrem Heim" (1929: 7)[28] has been improved to read "Mädchenzeit und ihrer Heimat" (1953: 5). "Jugend und Zuhause," though, would serve as an even more adequate and less dated translation.

In *The Translator's Invisibility* Lawrence Venuti characterizes the current consensus on a pleasing translation:

> A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text—the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the original. (1)

Fluency thus becomes the most frequently applied criterion, the translator assuming the role of the author and the translation passing for the original (Venuti 7), though the author controls the publication of the translation during the term of the copyright for the "original" text.

Nussbaum was strongly aware that she had to create a text that was pleasing to the German-language reader while doing justice to the original. Venuti emphasizes the violence that is inherent in translation—"the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that preexist in the target language"—or, more pointedly, the effort "to bring back a cultural other as the same" (Venuti 18). In her attempts to domesticate the text, Nussbaum fails to steer a consistent, unerring course. She oscillates between the extremes of ethnocentrism and foreignization. More specifically, she wavers between regionalisms—typical Austrian terms such as "Perrondach" and "Erdäpfel"—and foreign borrowings like "masher" (8),[29] between full translation of proper names—"Staats- und Seestraße" (11) for "State and Lake"—and partial translation like "Fox-

See" (85). Some sentences blend images that belong to different spheres. Thus Nussbaum's "blendet ihre Schönheit, wie Musik" (6), which literally translates as "beauty blinds like music," comes to stand for Dreiser's "their beauty, like music, too often relaxes." Faithful to individual words, Nussbaum often misses the proper German expression and sometimes replaces it with a false friend, the seductive English coinage. She thus invents "nette Geschäftskarte" (11) for "neat business card" and coins "hoher Mittag" (23) to render "high noon."

In 1953, when the revised version of *Schwester Carrie* came out, an anonymous German critic called its style sober, unpathetic, matter-of-fact ("Blick auf Theodore Dreiser"). The book, he thought, was fresh and showed no traces of aging. Still more interesting, though, is the critic's choice of *Schwester Carrie* as a starting point to interpret Dreiser's position as a writer: "*Schwester Carrie* is Dreiser's first work, and the curious fate of this book explains the position of its author in the history of American literature." For this critic, *Schwester Carrie* was presented not only "as an example for the errant human guided less by reason than by a desire for beauty," but also as a new text combating hypocrisy and lies in society, "a revolutionary manifesto."[30]

On the occasion of Dreiser's death literary critics repeated the story of the suppression of *Sister Carrie* in all the major German newspapers and magazines. And a decade after his death, the legend was again used to attack McCarthyism and to celebrate Dreiser as a pioneer for individual freedom (D. L.). While *Schwester Carrie*, the translation, is a version of *Sister Carrie* in its own right and has a history of its own, the key role and meaning of the text has been established along surprisingly similar lines in Germany and the United States. T. S. Eliot's claim "that no one nation, no one language, would have achieved what it has, if the same art had not been cultivated in neighbouring countries and in differing languages" (112) not only furnishes a strong argument for translation but also aptly underlines the indebtedness of the German readership to the American writer, the Austrian translator, and the crosscurrents of Western culture.

Notes

1. For additional detail, see von Bardeleben, "Central Europe in Travelogues by Theodore Dreiser" 155.

2. Dreiser's European diary and the correspondence with his translators and the Zsolnay publishing house are held in the Theodore Dreiser Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania. Quotations from the diary and

letters in the Dreiser Papers are by permission of the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. I am indebted to Nancy Shawcross, the curator of the Dreiser Collection, and the staff of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library for their generous support of my research. I also wish to thank Yoshinobu Hakutani, who initiated this study, Thomas P. Riggio, and the editors of *Dreiser Studies* for their helpful comments.

3. A comparison of the correspondence of the three prospective translators shows that von Schön was the most talented writer and probably had the best knowledge of English.

4. von Schön to Dreiser, 11 April 1926, forwarded to Boni & Liveright.

5. von Schön to Dreiser, 16 Sept. 1926.

6. Felix Costa to Dreiser, 16 Sept. 1929.

7. See von Bardeleben, "Dreiser on the European Continent. Part Two" 5–8.

8. The original agreement is a three-page document, dated 3 March 1927, addressed to Herman George Scheffauer, whom Dreiser had met in Berlin in 1926 and who was representing the author. The general conditions were formally renewed as a contract on 11 November 1930.

9. During the depression, Zsolnay had great difficulty paying royalties in foreign currency, which had been restricted by the state. For this and other reasons he established a Swiss branch for issuing popular editions in Zurich in 1930, by which branch *An American Tragedy* was published in 1931. In 1932 Zsolnay planned to issue a cheap edition of *Sister Carrie* to which Dreiser vehemently objected. Ignoring the increasing difficulties of the firm, he asked for prompt payment of his royalties and threatened legal action (See Dreiser to Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 29 Nov. 1932). Fighting for higher royalties for the popular edition of *An American Tragedy,* Dreiser eventually went to court in Vienna in 1937 and won the lawsuit (Hall 208–12, 220).

10. Letter to Dreiser by the accountant of Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 24 Aug. 1931.

11. The campaign against Jewish publishers was initiated by Will Vesper in *Die Neue Literatur*, a publication of the Börsenverein der Deutschen Buchhändler, Association of German Publishers. In the July 1933 issue, p. 422, Vesper wrote that the campaign ("Hetze") against Germany was "especially supported by the authors of the Jewish Viennese publishing house Zsolnay," thus furnishing the text for the later blacklisting of Dreiser (qtd. in Hall 404).

12. The official in charge, Dr. J. Gruber, here states that "the reasons which caused the banning of Dreiser's works were his non-Aryan descent and the fact that he had campaigned against Germany. For these reasons none of his works can be allowed for sale" (qtd. in Hall 272; my translation.).

13. After the annexation of Austria, the expropriation and confiscation of Jewish firms started immediately. Paul Zsolnay handed over 51% of his property to two

front men and began to live in London from where he still tried to direct his former firm. In April 1939 the firm was closed and Dr. Wilhelm Hoffmann was commissioned to represent the publishing house until a buyer was found in the person of Karl H. Bischoff on 1 October 1941 (Hall 644–89). Felix Costa was dismissed in March 1939 and deported with his family to Minsk in August 1941. He did not survive the war.

14. Zsolnay adopted the same strategy he had used to set up his publishing house, which returned to its original name Paul Zsolnay Verlag in July 1946: he rebuilt his firm by publishing a high number of international authors. In August 1946 he announced to the press that "besides some Austrian writers he was preparing new editions of Pearl S. Buck, A. J. Cronin, Theodore Dreiser, John Galsworthy, H. G. Wells and thus was reestablishing the old reputation by serving a readership interested in modern world literature" (qtd. in Hall 768; my translation.).

15. After the Second World War, as established by *Index translationum* and research in major libraries, *Schwester Carrie* was published as a revised edition by Zsolnay in Vienna, Austria, in 1949, 1953, 1954. In the Federal Republic of Germany, Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag in Hamburg first published *Schwester Carrie* in 1953; it was reprinted in 1955, 1956, 1978. It was also published by Kindler (München) in 1963. The novel was a staple of various book clubs: Deutsche Hausbücherei (Hamburg, 1953 and Berlin, 1960), Büchergilde Gutenberg (Wien, 1953 and Wien, 1977; Frankfurt, 1977), Stuttgarter Hausbücherei (Stuttgart, 1959), Deutscher Bücherbund (Düsseldorf, 1959), and Die Buchgemeinde (Wien, 1964).

In the German Democratic Republic *Schwester Carrie* was published by Aufbau-Verlag Berlin in 1953, reissued in 1954, 1955, 1956, 1963, 1965, 1968, 1972, and issued as a paperback in 1980. Copyright is listed with Paul Zsolnay Verlag G. m.b.H.

For comparison, *Eine Amerikanische Tragödie* was republished by Zsolnay in Vienna in 1951 (8 printings by 1962), in the same year by Rowohlt in Hamburg (8 printings by 1962), and a year later, 1952, by Aufbau-Verlag in Berlin (5 printings by 1975). It has also had 5 printings by various book clubs between 1959 and 1978.

16. The numerous low-priced copies still on the market do not provide an incentive for publishers to consider a new edition. Although Dreiser's works were reprinted after the Second World War, he did not regain the same stature he had held before the war. He has since been more popular in eastern Germany where he was mainly read as a social critic and as a critic of America. In western Germany readers soon shifted their attention to more recent American writers who, as a rule, were not available in the East before reunification.

17. As early as 1929 the reviewer of the daily *Berlin am Morgen* had demanded the use of less (nationally) restricted terms: "it won't do to call a constable of the American police 'Schupo.' " "Schupo" as used by Nussbaum was the current

colloquial abbreviation for the term "Schutzpolizist." See Costa to Dreiser, 16 Sept. 1929.

18. The survey was based on a sample passage from the second revised edition, translated by Anna Nussbaum and published by Aufbau Verlag Berlin (copyright Paul Zsolnay Verlag) in 1953. The 1953 edition does not indicate that it is a revision of the 1929 text.

19. In *Kindlers Literatur Lexikon*, the 25-volume German encyclopedia on world literature published in 1974, Claus Schweer discusses *Schwester Carrie* against the background of *The Jungle* (8766). The chronology of the reception of the two novels in Germany produces the curious effect of reversing the sequence of composition in the critical judgment by the German reader.

20. Translated from Horst Frenz and John Hess, "Die nordamerikanische Literatur in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik" 176.

21. In his letter of September 16, 1929, Costa mentions "the complete manuscript" of Scheffauer's translation of *The Titan,* possibly referring here to a translation of the revised edition of *The Financier* (1927). He states that this translation had to be thoroughly revised, since readers did not like it, and that the result was still disappointing. If Scheffauer was in fact the "German critic" Dreiser cites as his source in his letter of August 26, 1929, he may also have acted from personal frustration.

22. In this letter Dreiser reprimanded the publisher, stating that he had requested "not to allow Dr. Nussbaum to do this work" and "that under no circumstances do I wish Dr. Nussbaum to ever be permitted to do the translation of any of my other books."

23. Costa to Dreiser, 16 Sept. 1929. There is no document supporting Dreiser's statement of August 26, 1929, that he had withheld his consent for Nussbaum to translate *Sister Carrie*. For lack of it Costa points to the fact that, in his eyes, by corresponding with Nussbaum, Dreiser had rather seemed to accept Nussbaum as a translator. As the Nussbaum correspondence proves, this translator had in fact stirred up an interest in the works of Dreiser by rival firms such as Insel Verlag at a time when Zsolnay was doubtful about whether to continue with the obligation resulting from the contract. See Zsolnay to Dreiser, 14 and 25 Feb. 1927. Dreiser's agents, Brandt & Brandt, seem to have used the offer by Insel Verlag to exert pressure on the Zsolnay publishing house, which may have been the pushing effect intended by Nussbaum, who had long been desirous of having a work by Dreiser assigned for her to translate.

24. Costa to Dreiser, 27 Aug. 1929. In a letter of July 12, 1929, Nussbaum had asked Dreiser for permission to translate *A Hoosier Holiday* and *A Book About Myself.* Dreiser immediately responded by sending a letter to Zsolnay on July 23, 1929, in which he expressed his wish "that another translator other than Frau Nussbaum

undertake these new books." He then suggested Prof. Dr. F. C. Steinermayer of Prague University and Lina Goldschmidt of Berlin as future translators. Steinermayer, who was known as a critic, and Goldschmidt, who had written the scenario for a dramatic version of *An American Tragedy* (Lingeman 396), were to translate *Moods*, Dreiser's book of poetry, but due to the changing economic and political situation, the translation was not published. *A Book About Myself* was translated by E. Weiss and published in 1932 as *Jahre des Kampfes,* a title to which Dreiser objected (see Dreiser to Zsolnay, 29 Nov. 1932). *A Hoosier Holiday* has not been translated.

25. Possibly Louise Campbell. The secretary's handwritten note on Nussbaum's letter of February 6, 1929, is signed "L."

26. Dreiser to Nussbaum, 28 Feb. 1929.

27. Most of the items discussed here have been selected from the sample passage cited on pp. 72–73. To illustrate the full range of translatorial problems (which do not all occur in the above quoted sample), a few additional examples have been chosen from the first 10 chapters of the novel.

28. "Heim" has become a euphemism for "children's home."

29. The 1929 translation offers "Nachsteiger" (10), which, though a German word, is no less incomprehensible for the reader.

30. Translated from a full-page review of Dreiser's work collected by Karola Dreiser, Dreiser's cousin in Mayen. Internal evidence shows that it dates from 1953. It has not been possible to establish the full bibliographical data.

Works Cited

Bardeleben, Renate von. "Central Europe in Travelogues by Theodore Dreiser: Images of Berlin and Vienna." *Images of Central Europe in Travelogues and Fiction by North American Writers*. Ed. Waldemar Zacharasiewicz. Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1996. 144–58.

——. "Dreiser on the European Continent. Part Two: The Reception of Dreiser in Western Europe." *Dreiser Newsletter* 3.1 (1972): 1–8.

"Blick auf Theodore Dreiser." n.p. [1953]. Photostat copy, collected by Karola Dreiser.

D. L. "Er schrieb die *Tragödie*." *Abend* 29 Dec. 1955: n.p.

Dreiser, Theodore. Theodore Dreiser Papers. University of Pennsylvania Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

——. *Schwester Carrie*. Trans. Anna Nussbaum. Wien: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 1929.

——. *Schwester Carrie*. Trans. Anna Nussbaum. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1953.

——. *Sister Carrie*. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1900.

Eliot, T[homas] S[tearns]. "The Unity of European Culture." *Notes Towards the*

Definition of Culture. London: Faber and Faber, 1948.

Frenz, Horst, and John Hess. "Die nordamerikanische Literatur in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik." *Nordamerikanische Literatur im deutschen Sprachraum seit 1945: Beiträge zu ihrer Rezeption*. Ed. Horst Frenz and Hans-Joachim Lang. München: Winkler Verlag, 1973. 171–99.

Hall, Murray G. Hall. *Der Paul Zsolnay Verlag: Von der Gründung bis zur Rückkehr aus dem Exil*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1994.

Index translationum. International Bibliography of Translations. Ed. Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle. Vols. 1–31. Mayenne: Floch, 1932–40.

Index translationum. Vols. 1 (1948)–39 (1986). Paris: UNESCO, 1949–1992.

Index translationum. Ed. UNESCO Sector for Culture. 1979/94 CD ROM edition, 1999.

Lingeman, Richard. *Theodore Dreiser: An American Journey, 1908–1945*. New York: Putnam, 1986

Schweer, Claus. "*Sister Carrie* (amer.; *Ü: Schwester Carrie*)." *Kindlers Literatur Lexikon im dtv*. Vol. 20. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1974. 8765–66.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

Sister Carrie and the Chinese Mentality

Daochao Jiang
Shenzhen University

I. THE RECEPTION OF *SISTER CARRIE* IN CHINA

Theodore Dreiser was first introduced to Chinese readers early in the 1930s. In "The Real Tragedy of America," Qu Qiubai, a great revolutionary and famous prose writer, says that "Dreiser's genius in literature is, like a Venus, glittering in the sky" and that "Dreiser is a great writer in describing American life" (qtd. in Pan ix). Since the founding of the Republic of China in 1949, all of Dreiser's novels and some of his short stories have been translated into Chinese and have been well received by Chinese readers. Besides the translations, some critical studies of his work and life and biographies have appeared, such as Wei Zhang's *Works by Theodore Dreiser: An Appreciation* (1999), Mao Xinde's biography, *Dreiser* (1984), and Daochao Jiang's biography, *Dreiser* (2001). *An American Tragedy* and *Sister Carrie* have also been included in textbooks for college students. Since the Open Door policy has been in effect, beginning in 1976, eight Chinese editions of *Sister Carrie* have appeared.[1]

Because of the effect of the Cultural Revolution, during which academic activities gave way to political maneuvers, criticism of *Sister Carrie* did not begin until the early 1980s and mainly centered on the realism of the novel. Guanghan Luo's "On the Realism in *Sister Carrie,*" Yin Zhi's "Dreiser's 'Carrie' and 'Jennie,' " and Jian Luo's "Realism in Dreiser's Early Writings"[2] mainly discuss how truthfully Dreiser depicts social life in America and how his realism echoes Zola's in France. And each critic concludes that *Sister Carrie* is an outspoken criticism of American capitalism.

In the 1990s, more critical writings on *Sister Carrie* appeared.[3] These essays vary in subject from the philosophical ideas in the novel to Dreiser's writing skill to Carrie's similarity to other American or British literary char-

Dreiser Studies • Spring 2002, Vol. 33, No. 1
© 2002 Dreiser Studies

acters. For example, in "The Suggestive Effects of Symbolism," Lili Yang claims that Dreiser's symbols such as the "rocking chair" and the "door" at the end of the story suggest an "indifferent society which is insensible to the individual and which reduces everyone in it to a feeling of complicity and powerlessness and frustration till they lose hope and die." Dreiser reveals the reality of "a deterministic world," and *Sister Carrie* illustrates "the disproportion between man and his natural world" (60) and portrays characters torn between "supremacy and success" and an awareness of "man's homelessness and helplessness" (63). In "Study of Dreiser's Philosophical Ideas in *Sister Carrie,*" Hezhen Zhang examines Dreiser's naturalism. Chapter 8, which she examines closely, is Dreiser's declaration of naturalism as his narrative mode, since Dreiser obviously adopted Darwinism, advocating amorality and the idea that instinct drives people to action. Wenxing Li believes that writers' works reflect their changing philosophical views on life and society. For Wenxing Li, *Sister Carrie* and *Jennie Gerhardt* reflect Dreiser's changing attitudes from naturalism to realism. Through comparison of *Sister Carrie* and *Jennie Gerhardt*, Qinzhu You also discusses the naturalistic tendency in Dreiser's writing. He asserts that in the late 19th century and early 20th century American capitalism developed rapidly, while social contradictions and man's pessimism developed as well. The American dream became an illusion; social Darwinism and its theory of "the survival of the fittest" became widely accepted. God, in whom many people had lost their faith, was, if believed in, often seen as helpless and indifferent to the wretched. Life suddenly became meaningless. Qinzhu You concludes that Dreiser and Crane were the spokesmen of naturalism and that their works attacked American society at the time.

These interpretations of *Sister Carrie* have helped ordinary readers to know the story and to understand to a certain extent the implications of the novel. These critics' readings, however, are biased and superficial, for they focus on explaining the narrative of the novel rather than interpreting it critically. Methodologically, Chinese critics typically employ historical and biographical methods of analysis, superficially identifying the author with the characters. In general, they either just classify Dreiser as a naturalist, without discussing the particulars and implications of the novel, or regard *Sister Carrie* as a simple criticism of capitalism. Moreover, except for Li, these critics do not have a developmental view of Dreiser as a writer. They tend to group *Sister Carrie* with Dreiser's other novels and draw the same conclusion about them all. Finally, the resources they have at hand are out-of-date. Most of the reference books they have access to were published in the 1920s and 1930s.

II. THE CHINESE TRANSLATION AND SHADES OF MEANINGS

The many editions of *Sister Carrie* obviously indicate its popularity in China. But at the same time, the efforts of Chinese translators to express Dreiser's intentions more accurately have not always captured Dreiser's meaning and nuance.

To illustrate the problems of translation, especially in sentence structure, syntax, vocabulary, and grammar, we can refer to the most recent translation by Yilin Press (1999). English writers such as Dreiser often use participial phrases and infinitive phrases, with their "love of economy, common sense and forcefulness" (Lin 80), while Chinese writers tend to write complete sentences. For example, chapter one of the 1900 edition of *Sister Carrie* begins with the title "The Magnet Attracting—A Waif Amid Forces." The title consists of two noun phrases, with the first noun modified by a participial and the second by a prepositional phrase. The two phrases are roughly parallel. The title is very simple and terse. But when translated into Chinese, the title becomes two sentences, though still parallel in structure: "The Attraction of the Metropolis Is Just Like the Magnet, The Sister From the Countryside Is Homeless and Helpless." Furthermore, in the translation, some explanations are added. In the English version, it is only implied that Chicago is just like a magnet attracting people, and "waif" is undefined, but in the Chinese translation, "metropolis," "sister from the countryside," and "homeless and helpless," as well as the verb "is" and the preposition "like," are added. Such examples are many. Generally, Dreiser's prepositional phrases, participial phrases, and noun phrases become complete sentences in Chinese translations. Moreover, in Chinese translations some abstract nouns are replaced by concrete images, and, in most cases, implied meanings are directly stated. For example, in the sentence "whatever touch of regret at parting characterized her thoughts, it was certainly not for advantages now being given up," is translated as "whatever touch of regret when she left home characterized the feelings of regret in her heart. She cried not because she could not bear leaving her beautiful hometown." The abstract "at parting" is translated into "when she left home"; "home" in Chinese is a concrete image. "Thoughts" is translated into "the feelings of regret in her heart." In Chinese, "heart" is also a concrete image. The phrase in English "Not for advantages now being given up" is translated into a complete sentence in Chinese: "she cried not because of the beauty the hometown has." Moreover, "advantages," an abstract noun in English, is translated into a concrete noun phrase, "the beauty the hometown has." Interestingly, in ancient China, the Chinese tended to

prefer simplicity: "the language, in its form, syntax and vocabulary, reveals an extreme simplicity of thinking, concreteness of imagery and economy of syntactical relationships" (Lin 80). Only after 1949, when the Communist Party attained sovereignty over the country, did the government begin to encourage abandoning ancient Chinese sentence structures, forms, vocabulary, and grammar, retaining only the preference for concrete images. As a result, modern Chinese sentences are not as short or as simple as before.

In summary, Dreiser's English sentences are relatively short with a frequent use of participial phrases, prepositional phrases, and noun phrases, while Chinese sentences are more complex and longer. In Chinese translation relations among sentence elements are often indicated through the context (e.g., some subjects may be omitted). Still, the Chinese translation appears awkward and superfluous. For example, in the third paragraph of the English version, the first three sentences are "When a girl leaves her home at eighteen, she does one of two things. Either she falls into saving hands and becomes better, or she rapidly assumes the cosmopolitan standard of virtue and becomes worse. Of an intermediate balance, under the circumstances, there is no possibility." When translated into Chinese, the first two sentences become one, with the subjects omitted in clauses, and the translator adds some explanations: "saving hands" becomes "good people who teach you to be benevolent." The difference in the translation of the next sentence is even more obvious. The sentence "Of an intermediate balance, under the circumstances, there is no possibility" is relatively short and very clear. In Chinese it becomes, "It is impossible under the circumstances to take the middle path, not becoming worse or better." In the Chinese translation, the English prepositional phrase "Of an intermediate balance" becomes a participial phrase in apposition to "path" and the noun "possibility" becomes an adjective.

III. THE CHINESE CULTURE AND MENTALITY

Behind these problems of translation may be deep-level cultural differences. Americans tend to be more direct, more open-minded, and more efficient than the Chinese. Yutang Lin, the author of *My Country and My People* (2000), illustrates the difference between Chinese and Western culture in an essay entitled "I Killed A Man." He recalls that when he was in Shanghai a Chinese visitor first talked about the day's weather and then moved on to talk about Yutang Lin's works, and only when he was saying goodbye did he request Lin to do him a favor, that of recommending his writing to a magazine editor with whom Lin was familiar. Yutang Lin uses

this case to indicate that the Chinese are not open and direct, especially when they request people to help. The man in the example did not tell Yutang Lin about the purpose of his visit directly. Only before his departure did he mention briefly and casually his request. Well versed in Western culture and actually much westernized (his father, a preacher in a Christian church, taught him the English Bible when he was a child), Yutang Lin could understand that man's purpose, and since he thought that man's request was indecent, he openly and directly refused to help. From the confrontation between Yutang Lin and his visitor, we can see the difference between the traditional Chinese way of thinking and the Western way of thinking.

The Chinese tend to avoid direct confrontation, which is reflected in the flexible but still very powerful sport of shadow boxing. Shadow boxing, like translation, reflects what characterizes the Chinese mentality: a preference for indirection rather than direct statement. For thousands of years, the Chinese have observed this preference consciously or unconsciously.

Because of their sexual and social conservatism, average Chinese readers react to *Sister Carrie* with ambivalence. To the Chinese, "sister" both connotes comradeship and means "a helpless weakling" who is at the mercy of evil forces or unfavorable circumstances. They sympathize with Carrie, possibly as Dreiser had expected readers to do, but they also disapprove of her independence. Chinese readers are uncomfortable with Carrie's desire to leave her home and parents, to go to the big city by herself, to be so stubborn, so stone-hearted as not to feel regretful at parting with her dear parents. In their view, Carrie should have stayed where she was, though she would suffer poverty and backwardness. People, especially women, are not encouraged to be mobile, to escape from the authority of the parents. Confucius, the greatest philosopher and thinker in China, said, "do not travel far while your parents are alive." Ultimately, remaining within the family circle means safety for women and retention of their virginity. While leaving home may mean escaping from parental authority, it also means encountering potential threats. Yutang Lin once said that "in China, man is always thought of as greater and more important than the state, but he is never thought of as greater and more important than the family, because, apart from the family, he has no real existence" (186).

Based upon the above cultural assumptions, Chinese responses to *Sister Carrie* mostly concern the capitalist system, which both allows Carrie the freedom to pursue her own life and also drives her to become first Drouet's and then Hurstwood's mistress. Though regarding mistresses as obscene and corrupted, readers don't blame Carrie, for they regard her as a

victim of capitalism. To Chinese readers, *Sister Carrie* teaches that to avoid the disgrace, shame, and ultimately punishment that comes with sex before marriage a girl should remain closely attached to the patriarchal family and should not be too independent. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and even in the decade after it, readers' tastes and criticisms were much shaped by the party's dictum that literature and art should serve socialism. Literature was endowed with an almost exclusively political function. Therefore, the purpose of writing and reading literature was to help people understand the party's policy, which emphasized totalitarianism and collectivism but discouraged individualism and imperialism. We used to connect individualism with the West, especially America. Any writers or writings which showed approval for American capitalism would be considered of low artistic quality, and any writings which exhibited criticism of American capitalism would be ranked highly. We chose to translate Theodore Dreiser's novels solely because we considered him to be a writer who showed sympathy for ordinary American people and who criticized the American political system and social mores. In the preface to the Chinese translation of *The Financier*, Qinlin Pan expresses his respect for Dreiser by writing that "Dreiser used to participate in American labor movements and joined the American Communist Party under the leadership of William Foster in 1945." Moreover, Dreiser, in his application to join the communist party, "showed his respect and admiration for the Chinese Communist Party after the Anti-Japanese War" (qtd. in Qiu iv). We love *Sister Carrie*, therefore, not because the novel is artistically and aesthetically perfect, but because the novel is an indictment of America, the model of capitalism.

But changes occurred in moral and literary tastes in the late 1980s and 1990s, after the Open Door policy was adopted. We have become more generous in our perspective, more inclusive morally and politically about Carrie and her "degradation." Readers see Carrie as amoral, as Dreiser himself intended, but not as a victim. For example, the Chinese translation of the title of *Sister Carrie* suggests that Carrie may be the mistress of an important person, not necessarily denoting her moral looseness. We have a special term for this kind of girl, a "caged bird." While such women exist, they are not common. In China, we also have a few writers who advocate taking mistresses to serve as an outlet for extra energy and to stabilize the family unit. Because of the abundant importation of Western writings and therefore their influence upon the audience, the Chinese have become more tolerant of people like Carrie. The government, though not encouraging the taking of mistresses and actually attempting to suppress it, can not change people's behavior easily. For example, the former governor of Guangxi

Province took a beautiful young mistress and spent millions of dollars building mansions for her in Hong Kong. He was finally judged and executed not because of his taking a mistress but because of his taking bribes and abusing the power of his position. Readers may also approve of thousands of young girls going to such developed areas as Shenzhen and Shanghai, to be independent and courageous and to fulfill their dreams of having their own identity. Obviously, our attitude towards morality has changed much and is becoming more tolerant than before towards mistresses and divorce.

On their part, recent Chinese literary critics tend to focus more on aesthetics and cultural relevance of literature. Criticisms of artistic structure, characterization, or themes have appeared. We have followed the model of the New Critical school. I myself have written an introduction for Yilin Press's new Chinese translation of *Sister Carrie* which traces the development of criticisms of *Sister Carrie* since the 1970s.[4] My thesis is that Carrie is only a symbolic representation of the writer's own understanding of the new capitalist culture. As Joseph Epstein pointed out in his key-note speech at the "*Sister Carrie* Turns 100" conference at the University of Pennsylvania in November 2000, Dreiser tried to tell the story of the "breadth of life and the breath of life." In my understanding, Dreiser, through the presentation of the facts of life at the turn of the 20th century, questioned how we should react to the pursuit of material comfort, the hedonist attitude towards life as exemplified by Carrie. Caught between the old production-oriented ideology and the new consumption-oriented ideology, Dreiser was really ambivalent himself. I also point out Dreiser's negotiation with the dominant ideologies.

In sum, the Chinese translation of *Sister Carrie* illustrates the differences between English and Chinese syntactical, semantic, and cultural structures. The values embedded in the novel have variously influenced readers and led to new cultural and political assumptions. The world is becoming smaller and smaller, and the things we can share are increasing. Therefore, all of us are naturally concerned with our common natural resources and humanity. We believe that with more cultural contacts and a shared humanity people can certainly create a multicultural entity as well as a social and political entity. Reading Dreiser offers perhaps one of the best ways in which we can achieve such cultural contacts and such a multicultural entity.

Notes

1. These editions are: *Sister Carrie*, trans. Zhuchang Qiu (Shanghai: Shanghai Translation P, 1980, 1988, 1990); *Sister Carrie*, trans. Qiqin Guo (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research P, 1992); *Sister Carrie*, trans. Ruzhi Xu (Taiyuan: Beiyue Literature and Arts P, 1994); *Sister Carrie*, trans. Kunzun Liu (Guangzhou: Huacheng P, 1995); *Sister Carrie*, trans. Shuhui Xiao (Hefei: Anhui Literature and Arts P, 1996, 1999); *Sister Carrie*, trans. Chongmao Liu (Xi'an: Shanxi People's Publishing House, 1996); *Sister Carrie*, trans. Quan Wen (Xi'an: Shanxi Tourist P, 1995); *Sister Carrie*, trans. Kefei Wang (Nanjing: Yilin P, 1999); *Sister Carrie,* trans. Yao Chang (Huhehaote: Yuanfang Press, 2001); *Sister Carrie*, trans. Ming Li (Huhehaote: Inner Mongolia UP, 2001); *Sister Carrie*, trans. Chuan Yang (Yanji: Yanbian People's P, 2001); *Sister Carrie*, trans. Ruzhi Xu (Yanji: Yanbian People's P, 2001).

2. Guanghan Luo, "On the Realism in *Sister Carrie,*" *Foreign Literature Studies* (Beijing) 11 (1982): 111–16; Yin Zhi, "Dreiser's 'Carrie' and 'Jennie,' " *Foreign Literature Studies* (Beijing) 12 (1989): 135–38; and Jian Luo, "Realism in Dreiser's Early Writings" *Foreign Literature Studies* (Beijing) 4 (1989): 141–48.

3. Wenxing Li, "Dreiser's Change of Philosophical Thinking Viewed from *Sister Carrie* and *Jennie Gerhardt,*" *Journal of Xuchang Teachers College* 3 (2000): 85–88; Qinzhu You, "The Comparison of *Sister Carrie* and *Maggie*," *Journal of Jiangsu Teachers College* 4 (1994): 71–73; Hezhen Zhang, "Study of the Philosophical Ideas in *Sister Carrie,*" *Journal of Hangzhou Teachers College* 2 (1999): 28–35; Lin Yang, "Comparison of Carrie's and Tess's Character," *Journal of Anhui University* 4 (1999): 25–28; and Lili Yang, "The Suggestive Effects of Symbolism-Writing Skills in *Sister Carrie*," *Journal of Lanzhou University* 28 (2000, Supplement): 60–63.

4. See also my article "Cultural Assumption Difficult to Transcend—A Review of the 20th-Century Studies of Theodore Dreiser in China and USA," *Journal of Shenzhen University* 5 (2000): 87–94.

Works Cited

Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. Modern Library Edition. Cleveland: World , 1932.

——. *Sister Carrie*. Trans. Wang Kefei. Nanjing: Yilin P, 1999.

Jiang, Daochao. *Dreiser*. Chendu: Sichuan People's P, 2001.

Lin, Yutang. *The Importance of Living*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research P, 1999.

——. *My Country and My People*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research P, 2000.

Mao, Xinde. *Dreiser*. Shenyang: Liaonin People's P, 1984.

Pan, Qinlin. Introduction. *An American Tragedy*. By Theodore Dreiser. Trans. Qinlin Pan. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation P, 1994. i–x.

Zhang, Wei. *Works by Theodore Dreiser: An Appreciation.* Wuhan: Wuhan Science and Technology UP, 1999.

Qiu, Zhuchang. Preface. *The Financier*. By Theodore Dreiser. Trans. Zhuchang Qiu. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation P, 1979. i–iv.

The Hidden Polemics in *Sister Carrie*

Kiyohiko Murayama
Tokyo Metropolitan University

Though many of his works have been translated into Japanese, Dreiser has never enjoyed high esteem among Japanese readers, the main reason being that his style has been regarded as clumsy. The Japanese tradition of aestheticism dictates an elegant style for a novelist. Neither the disparaging of Dreiser's style nor the notoriety of literary naturalism, a movement to which he was supposed to belong, helped the Japanese translations of his books find large audiences. Moreover, in the 1930s, Hideo Kobayashi, one of the most respected critics in modern Japan, condemned Dreiser's ineptness as a novelist. Interestingly, Junichirou Tanizaki, one of the great novelists in modern Japan and equally an aesthete, though perhaps of a different kind than Kobayashi, explicitly refutes Kobayashi's argument by extensively quoting passages in English from *An American Tragedy* and pointing to the felicities of Dreiser's style. Despite Tanizaki's reading of Dreiser's novel, Kobayashi's influence still prevails in Japan today. How the quality of the original work's style can be preserved in translation is a moot point, while the general hostility to Dreiser in postwar America has uncritically been received in Japan. Given such a situation, a new translation of Dreiser's work could not amount to anything without forcing readers to realize some excellence in his writing style.

The two translations of *Sister Carrie* published in the 1950s, which have been out of print for a long time, do not seem to have served much to improve Dreiser's reputation. The first translation, titled *Joyuu Kyarii (Actress Carrie)*, was apparently a rush job by Jirou Ozu, who would later produce the apogee of Shakespeare scholarship of Japan. His attempted revision remains unfinished, with only the first half of a revised edition having been published in 1959. The other translation, by Takashi Murakawa, is titled *Tasogare (Twilight)*, which follows the Japanese title of the American film *Carrie* featuring Jennifer Jones and Lawrence Olivier. This publica-

Dreiser Studies • Spring 2002, Vol. 33, No. 1
© 2002 Dreiser Studies

tion, coordinated with the release of the movie in Japan, is an abridgement of the original novel. In the absence of any available translation for the Japanese reading public for a long time, my new version came out in 1997 as part of the Iwanami Library. This publishing house offers a series of inexpensive, small-size paperback editions of foreign classics in Japanese translation, as well as Japanese works, not only of literature but of other fields, such as philosophy, history, and science. Founded in 1927 after the fashion of Reclam Universal-Bibliothek in Germany, it has long since become a Japanese cultural institution, already including thousands of titles. A book published therein establishes its classic status in Japan. The decision to publish a new translation of *Sister Carrie* from this firm may have resulted from a change in the intellectual climate under the recent American influence. Placed on such a venerable stage, my translation will, I hope, go a long way towards improving Dreiser's reputation in Japan.

The first three paragraphs of *Sister Carrie* show that Dreiser's style is neither one-dimensional nor stable.[1] In the first paragraph, there is nothing unusual: such an objective, impersonal narration by an unnamed narrator is customarily assumed to be a dominant factor in Dreiser's novels and literary naturalism in general. In the second paragraph, however, free indirect speech appears rather unexpectedly, for the passage beginning with "To be sure" and ending with the rhetorical question, "What, pray, is a few hours—a few hundred miles?" (1), is probably in Carrie's words, though the lack of a so-called reporting clause may entail ambiguity about whose words they are. In a passage from later in the chapter, the same feeling is again produced, but this time unambiguously as Carrie's words, through the formally perfect example of indirect speech: "She half closed her eyes and tried to think it was nothing, that Columbia City was only a little way off" (7). This passage corroborates that the sentiment represented in the second paragraph is that of Carrie.

Thus, the narrative style quickly switches from the objective storytelling in the first paragraph to the subjective free indirect speech of Carrie in the second paragraph. Indeed, free indirect speech like this abounds in the novel, conveying inner thoughts or feelings of not only Carrie but many other characters as well. Therefore, contrary to the unexamined assumption that objective narration dominates Dreiser's novels, most scenes and events in this novel are actually depicted through the lenses of the characters' subjective points of view, which the device of free indirect speech is employed to incorporate into the narration.

Dreiser's technique of free indirect speech, unlike Henry James's, for instance, is somewhat variable. That rhetorical question in the second para-

graph, for example, would ordinarily be in the past tense instead of the present that would be employed in direct speech. There are many places in which such an unusual way of indirectly representing characters' words can be detected. Another example of Dreiser's uncertainty is found in Chapter 38 of the 1900 edition; that is, Hurstwood's words, like direct speech, are put in quotations, while they are indirectly represented in the third person narration: " 'He would look for something,' he thought. 'He would go and see if some brewery couldn't get him in somewhere. Yes, he would take a position as bartender, if he could get it' " (278). A similar irregularity can be found in the next page; this time, Carrie's words are quoted: " 'Would he really put her to work? Oh, blessed fortune, could it be?' " (279). Insofar as this is free indirect speech, the quotation marks are unnecessary, and the Pennsylvania Edition duly emends these passages by silently dropping them (cf. 387, 388). In the translator's notes, which are historical as well as textual in my translation, I mention this emendation as one of many interesting differences between the 1900 and 1981 editions.

Dreiser's use of free indirect speech is essential even if peculiar. After all, the characters whose words are represented in Dreiser's novel are inarticulate people, different from the sensitive and cultured people Henry James depicts through his perfect command of free indirect speech. As a translator, I had to bring out the characteristics of the narration in *Sister Carrie* through means other than the frequent use of free indirect speech, for Japanese grammar of direct and indirect speech is different from that of English. For one thing, I used colloquial diction associated with feminine and masculine ways of speaking in places colored by the subjective viewpoints of the characters or narrator. For instance, the rhetorical question in the second paragraph is rendered in my translation as follows: "Suujikan—ni-san byaku mairu no tabi nanka, taishita koto wa nai ja nai no." The words used here distinctly render a feminine way of speaking, though it is impossible to show, by translating it back into English, how feminine this sentence is since English has no system of such gender distinctions. Its literal translation, however, may serve to convey the feel of its colloquialness. Rather than the original "What, pray, is a few hours—a few hundred miles?" my translation is roughly equivalent to "Just a few hours' ride—only a few hundred miles—that doesn't matter, does it, Hon?" Rendered thus, the idiosyncrasy of Carrie's words becomes instantly obvious, perhaps even more obvious than in the original.

Proceeding to the third paragraph, we come across another peculiarity of Dreiser's style: his notorious "philosophizing." This paragraph begins with the sententious statement, "When a girl leaves her home at eighteen,

she does one of two things," and then warns against the city's "cunning wiles" (1). The whole paragraph is written in the present tense. This is not so much the style for storytelling as the style for argument. The precipitous change from the sympathetic representation of Carrie's feelings in the previous paragraph to the disdainful preaching in this paragraph is at the least startling. These "philosophizing" passages are translated so as to convey the declamatory, decidedly masculine, tone of a dreadful moralizer. To take a single short example out of the long paragraph, the phrase "cunning wiles" is translated as "koukatsuna terentekuda." This Japanese phrase is bookish and is rendered in my translation in Chinese ideograms, which are considered masculine while Japanese kana characters, easier to learn as phonetic symbols, are considered feminine in origin. Since Chinese is to Japanese what Latin is to English, the Japanese words in Chinese ideograms tend to make writing more highfaluting. The Japanese phrase in question may be closer to "insidious artifices" in English than the original "cunning wiles." By the frequent use of such phrases, I sought to make this paragraph sound in keeping with the tone of a bombastic seer, whom the narrator sometimes resembles.

The city is here compared to "the infinitely smaller and more human tempter" (1). In the convention of the sentimental novel of seduction, the seducer is usually a city dweller. In *Sister Carrie*, by a little trick of inversion, the urban setting is represented as seducing, rather than the seducer being regarded as urbane. And it is not so much Carrie as the city that embodies what Walter Benn Michaels calls "the logic of the market place": the city is the deputy of the capitalist culture of consumerism. Therefore, the narrator's warning against the city's "cunning wiles" can be easily transposed to a warning against capitalism. Soon after this paragraph, the narrator goes so far as to engage in his speech act of dissuasion with its perlocutionary purpose made explicit: "Lest this order of individual should permanently pass, let me put down some of the most striking characteristics of his most successful manner and method" (3). In this warning against the "human tempter" lies the narrator's, that is, Dreiser's, hostility to a seducer, and in their turn the city and capitalism.

About the passage quoted above, Alan Trachtenberg, in his article entitled "Who Narrates?" concludes that the narrator here "[qualifies], though inconspicuously, his claim to omniscience, to a privileged place in the narrative from which he might speak (as historian, for example) with unchallengeable objectivity" (95–96). About the same passage, Trachtenberg also writes, "[W]hatever ambiguity attaches to 'let me' and the implied presence of a narrating *character* barely causes a ripple" (96). Is it because of my for-

eignness to the English language that the narrator's emergence as a character, with a qualified "claim to omniscience," strikes me as more than a barely perceptible "ripple"? So far as I can understand, Trachtenberg calls our attention to an important subtlety in the narrative voice in *Sister Carrie*. The warning is virtually directed to Carrie as well as the reader, whom the narrator is supposed to address in such a "philosophizing" passage. In other words, the narrator is demoted to the terrain where he cannot help getting involved with the characters. It may be this feature of Dreiser's style that more than anything else irks the readers accustomed to what Jane Tompkins calls "modernist demands" (xvii) for objectivity or "prejudices formed during [her] education" (99) against the sentimental novel, in which such direct intervention abounds.

Dreiser's occasional use of the style of the sentimental novel may indicate his awareness of the contemporary literary battle in which the question was raised whether and how inarticulate people should be represented. As Laura Hapke observes,

> [A]s critical battles raged about the propriety of introducing Americans to the subject of "low life," feminine or otherwise, writers refashioned the sensational melodrama of earlier "wicked city" or "virtue betrayed" fiction. Infusing that formulaic subgenre with a quasi-sociology of the female workplace, the working girl's literary imaginers soon included the genteel practitioners of the Lower East Side seduction tale, who catered to middle-class preferences for the eleventh-hour rescue and the romanticized poor, and Stephen Crane, the bad boy of turn-of-the-century American fiction, who did not. Whether their orientation was sentimental or social Darwinist, romantic or naturalistic, such writers produced a body of work that explained the embattled urban working girl to an audience with no relation to her other than a condescending one. (3–4)

Against this background, "[t]he unusual character of Dreiser's narrative in *Sister Carrie*" (98), as Trachtenberg puts it, comes to the fore as a means of challenging or breaking down this condescending relation. According to Trachtenberg, it "derives from an innovative fusion of narrative and discourse, an equivocal and premodernist reordering of the priorities of the two modes" (98). Dismissing the "ripple" caused by "let me," however, Trachtenberg gives attention to "we" in a later discursive paragraph: "How true it is that words are but the vague shadows of the volumes we mean" (6). This passage is the first of several observations on inarticulate

people's sense of language that will be repeated in the novel. As Trachtenberg remarks, "Here [Dreiser] exceeds the normal privilege of omniscience. He introduces a voice as if from *inside* the narration (recalling the now silently implied 'let me'), yet registered in a tone and diction quite different from that of the narrative proper" (97). But the voice does not seem to me so different from the one in the "let me" passage: both speak in the present tense rather than narrative past and thus come from outside the story. The earlier "Lest this order of individual should permanently pass" does not seem to me to be from "inside the narration."

If "the implied presence of the narrator as a character" is fully heeded, the discursive nature of the third paragraph, which foregrounds the warning and anticipates later philosophizing passages, takes on a singular significance. These passages more straightforwardly than others indicate a "hidden polemics" similar to that which Mikhail Bakhtin finds to be a salient feature of Dostoevsky's novels (195ff).[2] Like the omniscient narrator supposedly dominant in naturalistic fiction, the narrator in *Sister Carrie* is not above addressing readers to explain characters' meanings. For, as Bakhtin makes clear, "in stylization, in the narrated story and in parody [that is, in ordinary literary works] the other person's discourse is a completely passive tool in the hands of the author wielding it. He takes, so to speak, someone else's meek and defenseless discourse and installs his own interpretation in it, forcing it to serve his own new purposes." However, as Bakhtin continues to explain, "In hidden polemic and in dialogue, on the contrary, the other's words actively influence the author's speech, forcing it to alter itself accordingly under their influence and initiative" (197). In *Sister Carrie*, the narrator does not remain aloof; he and the other characters frequently address themselves to each other and even to some unnamed addressee.

The first three paragraphs thus demonstrate the versatility of Dreiser's style, with each paragraph enunciated in different modes. From the very beginning, the style of the novel is polyphonic. As the novel unfolds, the position of the narrative voice becomes harder to locate. The tone of the narrative voice changes from paragraph to paragraph, revealing the inconsistencies and conflicts that lie beneath the surface. Almost every action or emotion of the main characters in the novel is depicted with implicit contradictory comments from this or that standpoint, not only by the narrator but by other characters. The heterogeneous style of *Sister Carrie* includes as well prefabricated discourse, such as newspaper accounts and advertisements, even passages lifted from popular culture, such as the notorious theft from George Ade in chapter 1 and the extended quotations from Augustin Daly's

Under the Gaslight. Rather resembling the jumble seen in the pages of newspapers, such a heterogeneous style rubs against the grain of modernist fiction, in which the autonomous unified self is prized.

Does this not remind us of what Bakhtin says about Dostoevsky's style? "The unity of a Dostoevskian novel, however, is *above* personal style and *above* personal tone," says Bakhtin, who continues,

> If viewed from a monologic understanding of the unity of style (and so far that is the only understanding that exists), Dostoevsky's novel is *multi-styled* or styleless; if viewed from a monologic understanding of tone, Dostoevsky's novel is *multi-accented* and contradictory in its values; contradictory accents clash in every word of his creations. If Dostoevsky's highly heterogeneous material had been developed within a unified world corresponding to the unified monologic consciousness of the author, then the task of joining together the incompatible would not have been accomplished, and Dostoevsky would be a poor artist, with no style at all. (15–16)

Such an understanding of fictional style may serve to rectify the prejudice against Dreiser as "a poor artist." It should enable us from a new perspective to appreciate Dreiser's "styleless" novel, which really ought to command respect comparable to that which Dostoevsky's work has enjoyed in Japan over the generations.

The versatile style in *Sister Carrie* may not be the product of Dreiser's conscious choice, but merely the effect of the perceptions and the training he acquired as a poor immigrant's son and a newspaper reporter. Nevertheless, the novel comes to represent a series of debates among the embattled social discourses in the American 1890s. It is this dynamic quality of the style in *Sister Carrie* that I wanted my translation to embody, playing up its "multi-style" and "contradictory accents," and rendering the inconsistent voice of the narrator in such shifting tones that do not ordinarily suit the unifying omniscient presence of the author.

Notes

1. Actually, those three paragraphs happen to be the example I used to address the question of Dreiser's style in my contribution to a collection of essays on *Sister Carrie* published in Japan: "Itsumademo Nosabaru koto no naiyouni (Lest This Should Permanently Pass)."

2. As for the relevancy of Bakhtin's idea of the polyphonic novel to *Sister*

Carrie, see my article " 'But a Single Point in a Long Tragedy': *Sister Carrie*'s Equivocal Style," particularly pp. 71ff.

Works Cited

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.

Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. 2nd ed. Ed. Donald Pizer. New York: Norton, 1991.

——. *Sister Carrie*. The Pennsylvania Edition. Ed. James L. W. West III, et al. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1981.

——. *Joyuu Kyarii (Actress Carrie)*. 2 vols. Trans. Jirou Ozu. Tokyo: Seikei-shoin, 1951.

——. *Tasogare (Twilight)*. 2 vols. Trans. Takashi Murakawa. Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten (Bookshop), 1954.

——. *Shisutaa Kyarii (Sister Carrie)*. 2 vols. Trans. Kiyohiko Murayama. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten (Bookshop), 1997.

Hapke, Laura. *Tales of the Working Girl: Wage-Earning Women in American Literature, 1890–1925*. New York: Twayne, 1992.

Kobayashi, Hideo. "Shousetsu no Mondai (Problems of the Novel)." *Shinchou (The New Trend)* (June 1932).

Michaels, Walter Benn. *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1987.

Murayama, Kiyohiko. " 'But a Single Point in a Long Tragedy': *Sister Carrie*'s Equivocal Style." In *Theodore Dreiser and American Culture: New Readings*, ed. Yoshinobu Hakutani. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2000. 65–78.

——. "Itsumademo Nosabaru koto no naiyouni (Lest This Should Permanently Pass)." Sister Carrie *no Genzai: Aratana Seiki eno Yomi* (Sister Carrie *Now: Readings toward the New Century*). Ed. Chuo University Dreiser Society. Tokyo: Chuo UP, 1999.

Tanizaki, Junichirou. *Bunshou Dokuhon (A Reader in the Technique of Writing)*. Tokyo: Chuo-Kouron, 1934.

Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790–1860*. New York: Oxford UP, 1985.

Trachtenberg, Alan. "Who Narrates? Dreiser's Presence in *Sister Carrie*." *New Essays on* Sister Carrie. Ed. Donald Pizer. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991. 87–122.

Caroline Meeber: A Liberated Manon Lescaut?

Yolanda Astarita Patterson
California State University, Hayward

When I was asked to analyze the French translation of *Sister Carrie* for the November 2000 Dreiser conference at the University of Pennsylvania, I replied with an immediate "yes" and assumed that I would easily find a copy of the translation in any number of bookstores while I was in Paris during the summer. This was not the case, however. Even though I followed up on leads provided by quite a few of my literary cronies, I simply could not find a French translation anywhere in the myriad bookstores that line the streets of the *Ville des Lumières*. So off I went to the new Bibliothèque Nationale François Mitterrand, described recently by a *San Francisco Chronicle* critic as "forbiddingly high-tech and user-unfriendly," where I jumped through all of the bureaucratic hoops necessary to get a library card and consult the one available copy of a 1996 French translation of *Sister Carrie* by Jeanne-Marie Santraud.

What immediately jumped out at me was the cover page indication that the novel was "traduit de l'américain," "translated from the American," not from the English, a distinction later confirmed for me when I took our summer quarter students through the Cathedral of Notre Dame and came upon a sign announcing that a priest was hearing confessions in French, English, and American. Friends later informed me that French universities now make a distinction between the study of English and the study of American.

As I compared the above text with the English of the Pennsylvania edition, I was struck by several shifts in emphasis brought about by Santraud's choice of words, which definitely reflect a French translator's psychological interpretation of what occurs in these first three paragraphs of the novel. Carrie's ticket literally "found itself," "se trouvait," in the yellow leather purse, while Dreiser describes the purse as "containing" the ticket. The French use of the reflexive form here suggests that Carrie has very little control over what is happening to her as she travels to Chicago. Carrie is

Dreiser Studies • Spring 2002, Vol. 33, No. 1
© 2002 Dreiser Studies

described as reserved, "réservée," rather than "timid," implying that she is wise enough to hold back and observe what is happening around her before plunging into any brash commitments but is quite capable of making decisions about how she will live her life.

It is of interest to see how the translator chooses to render Dreiser's repetition of the word "touch" in the first paragraph. Dreiser's "A touch of regret" becomes "the shadow of a regret," "l'ombre d'un regret," connoting a more ominous reaction to leaving everything familiar behind. And a "touch in the throat" is transformed into a "serrement dans la gorge" or "tightening in the throat," which sounds considerably more dramatic and pained than the original English would suggest. The French also uses much more poignant vocabulary than Dreiser's "pathetic sigh," rendering it as "un soupir à fendre l'âme," a sigh that could split open the soul, reflecting perhaps the translator's empathetic identification with Carrie Meeber.

The date is set in French by "on était en août 1889," literally "one was" or "we were," a rendition which makes the narrator seem more directly involved in what is happening to Carrie than Dreiser's "It was in August, 1889." However, by transforming "the familiar green environs of the village" into "les abords du village," "the approaches to the village," the translator distances herself from the emotions experienced by Carrie by omitting both their green hue and Carrie's familiarity with them.

There are some subtle emotional shifts brought about by the translator's choice of words in the very significant second paragraph of the text, which deals with the narrator's interpretation of Carrie's feelings as she leaves her childhood behind and heads for the big city. By changing Dreiser's verb tense from "Columbia City was not so very far away" to "Columbia City ne serait pas le bout du monde"—"Columbia City would not be the end of the world"—Santraud not only makes the original read more smoothly but also emphasizes Carrie's anticipation of a future in Chicago rather than her current state of limbo as she is in transit between two lives. And Columbia City will indeed become "the end of the world" for Carrie rather than "not so very far away." The very dated "What, pray, is a few hours—a hundred miles?" is rendered by "Dites-moi, que sont quelques heures, cent miles?"—"Tell me, what are a few hours, a hundred miles?"—which gives the narrator a much more personal presence in this paragraph, creating the illusion that he is sitting next to the reader calling attention to important details of the tale he is about to relate.

Santraud inserts the adverb "éventuellement" into Dreiser's simple "She could go back," making the sentence read "She could eventually go back." This has the effect of assuring the reader both that there is a long

story about to be told and that Carrie is not going to abandon the initiative she has decided to take before she explores all her options. By having Carrie's thoughts turn to "the way people live" in Chicago—"la façon dont on vivait"—rather than simply to "what Chicago might be," the translator emphasizes the degree to which Carrie's life will depend on her interaction with other people and her reaction to their different life styles. The fascination of the big city for those who have not been exposed to it is neatly rendered by Santraud's shift from Dreiser's "Since infancy her ears had been full of its fame" to an image of Carrie besieged by comments others have made to her about Chicago. "[O]n lui rabattait les oreilles de sa splendeur" translates literally as "people had been pounding at her ears with its splendor," indicating both the inescapable influence of the big city on those who live in the American Midwest and the aura of splendor rather than just fame that the uninitiated attach to it in their imagination.

How do the above paragraphs translate culturally from American English into French? As one travels along in the train with Carrie, any French reader can easily understand the aura of leaving behind a childhood in the "sticks" to gaze for the first time on the big city everyone always talks about. For the French, of course, that legendary place considered to be the center of the universe is Paris. The Pierre Capretz "French in Action" video program which I use in my intermediate language classes at Cal State Hayward indeed graphically shows the French obsession with Paris by focusing on a map of France identifying Paris in bold letters and everything else throughout the "Hexagone" with the word "province" printed over and over again. Despite the fact that the vast expanse of the United States provides numerous rivals to Chicago's claims for attention, the French translator has no difficulty conveying very vividly the excitement and change of life style involved in a young woman's leaving her family behind to seek her fortune in the fabled Chicago.

One cultural difference that struck me is the avoidance of what I would label Bible Belt vocabulary in the third paragraph. The English says that a girl may fall "into saving hands and become better," whereas the French translation has her falling into "protecting hands" and "gaining in wisdom," which, in my opinion, loses some of the "preachy" quality of the original. Yet the French translation more than makes up for the loss of the "saving hands" when, instead of having the girl "assuming" the cosmopolitan standard of virtue, as in Dreiser's third paragraph, it has her "folding up," "se plier," or buckling under and then being drowned in vice: "elle sombre dans le vice." This is indeed taking quite a bit of liberty with the original English, which simply says that she "becomes worse."

The fact that the Santraud translation was published very recently, in 1996, allows the translator to portray the adventuresome young Carrie quite comfortably through the lens of the more than half-century of feminism that began in France with the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in 1949. An earlier French translator might have had more difficulty rendering Carrie's situation sympathetically and through the eyes of the protagonist and might well have adopted a Zolaesque approach more militantly political in its outrage at the plight of the working class. Any late-twentieth-century translator cannot avoid being influenced by the hundreds of publications—literary, psychological, political, and sociological—which have focused on the plight of capable women prevented by their gender from fulfilling their potential.

What becomes somewhat lost in the French translation is the dated tone of Dreiser's narrative which, at least for this reader, occasionally sounds awkward and stilted. Santraud translates the description of the satchel "holding some minor details of the toilet" as "quelques menus accessoires de toilette," literally "some small toiletry accessories," which sounds smoother in French than does the original to a contemporary American ear. Likewise, "four dollars in money," for which we would today be more likely to say "four dollars in cash," is rendered as "quatre dollars en liquide," literally "four dollars in liquid assets," used regularly to mean "in cash," which has a much more contemporary ring to it.

What words or expressions are most difficult to translate into French? These would undoubtedly be certain terms that would also give pause to a contemporary reader because they are no longer used in exactly the same way as they were in 1900. In the first two paragraphs, the words "her total outfit consisted of" are rendered by "elle avait pour tout bagage," literally "the only baggage she had." "Outfit" is a very American concept and seems, as it is used here by Dreiser, to be closer to the translator's idea that it refers to what Carrie is bringing with her rather than to the more contemporary American connotation of what she is wearing. And Santraud's translation of Dreiser's "vast depots" as "des gares gigantesques," or "gigantic train stations," conveys a much clearer image than the original phrasing.

Dreiser's personification of the city as having its "cunning wiles no less than the infinitely smaller and more human tempter" sounds grammatically awkward and seems more easily comprehensible in the expanded French version: "La grande ville a ses ruses, et elles sont malignes, tout aussi malignes que celles du tentateur, de cet infiniment petit qu'est l'homme"—"The big city has its ruses, malevolent ones, just as malevolent as the ruses of the tempter, of that infinitely small creature that is man." The

large forces "which allure, with all the soulfulness of expression possible in the most cultured human" come across in the original as stilted and confusing. Santraud's rendition actually changes the original meaning as it creates a smoother sentence structure. "Des forces puissantes y exercent leur pouvoir envoûtant, et bouleversent jusqu'au tréfonds de l'âme avec toute l'intensité d'émotion la créature humaine la plus cultivée" transforms Dreiser's "large" forces into powerful ones exerting their strength on "the most cultured human creature," i.e., the victim of these forces, whereas the "most cultured human" in the original text seems to be referring to the perpetrator of the aforementioned "allure" rather than to the person who succumbs to it. The French translates literally as "Powerful forces exert their encompassing power there and upset the most cultured of human beings with the greatest intensity of emotion right down to the very depths of their soul."

The French version does not attempt to give a literal translation of "a wooing and fascinating eye" but rather refers to the look of "one who aspires to making himself loved," "qui aspire à se faire aimer," which is considerably more straightforward than the original American turn of phrase. And in the final sentence of the third paragraph, the female translator chooses to render "the simplest human perceptions" by "en l'homme les plus élémentaires facultés de discernement," literally "the most elementary faculties of discernment in *man*"—a choice which seems decidedly "incorrect" politically in the final decade of the twentieth century, when scholars have been exceedingly wary of using "man" as a generic term for humanity.

In French there are a number of different past tenses from which to choose for narration. Translator Santraud chose the literary "passé simple" over the more informal and conversational "passé composé" to convey the entire sequence of acts completed by Caroline Meeber as she left her former life behind her. With "monta," "enregistra," "assombrit," "grincèrent," and the definitive "se brisèrent," the impression is immediately conveyed to the reader that Carrie's former life is over and done with. The use of the imperfect to describe her father's continuing day labor, "travaillait," also indicates her awareness that his life and that of the rest of the family she is leaving behind will go on much as before. She, however, has definitely broken all ties with that life. It is now a historic past for her which will never be revisited.

There are very few comments by the translator in the French text, but she does note that while "Sister Carrie" could be more literally rendered as "Notre Carrie," "Our Carrie," in French, she and the editors have consciously chosen to keep Dreiser's original title. Since the French address

nuns as "ma soeur," "Ma Soeur Carrie" would not have been a viable option for a French title because it would have eliminated the ambiguity of Dreiser's use of the word "sister" and its effectiveness in leaving it to the reader to determine just what type of mission Carrie is pursuing.

A passing reference in the original novel indicates that Dreiser was no stranger to French literary tradition. In a passage describing a chorus girl who befriends Carrie just after Carrie has been bemoaning the fact that she never gets to keep any of the money she makes, the narrator remarks, "She was a gay little Manon, unwitting of society's fierce conception of morality, but nevertheless good to her neighbor and charitable" (396). This somewhat ambiguous reference to either the chorus girl or Carrie as a latter day Manon Lescaut situates her in a long line of French fictional heroines struggling toward fulfillment and independence. L'Abbé Prévost's 18th century novel highlighted the pitfalls of falling hopelessly in love with an attractive woman whose romantic feelings are tempered by her need to take on whichever lovers will enable her to continue to live the luxurious life to which she has become accustomed. By 1900, Theodore Dreiser has taken his heroine beyond the depths of despair of Gustave Flaubert's insatiably romantic Emma Bovary and on into a new century which affords a woman with talent and determination the opportunity to make a living and survive and thrive independently of the men who are attracted to her.

Works Cited

Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. New York: Penguin Books, 1981.

——. *Sister Carrie*, roman. Traduit de l'américain par Jeanne-Marie Santraud. Paris: J. Losfeld, 1996.

The First Three Paragraphs of *Sister Carrie* as They Appear in the English Originals and in Translation

THE 1900 DOUBLEDAY, PAGE EDITION:

CHAPTER I

THE MAGNET ATTRACTING: A WAIF AMID FORCES

When Caroline Meeber boarded the afternoon train for Chicago, her total outfit consisted of a small trunk, a cheap imitation alligator-skin satchel, a small lunch in a paper box, and a yellow leather snap purse, containing her ticket, a scrap of paper with her sister's address in Van Buren Street, and four dollars in money. It was in August, 1889. She was eighteen years of age, bright, timid, and full of the illusions of ignorance and youth. Whatever touch of regret at parting characterised her thoughts, it was certainly not for advantages now being given up. A gush of tears at her mother's farewell kiss, a touch in her throat when the cars clacked by the flour mill where her father worked by the day, a pathetic sigh as the familiar green environs of the village passed in review, and the threads which bound her so lightly to girlhood and home were irretrievably broken.

To be sure there was always the next station, where one might descend and return. There was the great city, bound more closely by these very trains which came up daily. Columbia City was not so very far away, even once she was in Chicago. What, pray, is a few hours—a few hundred miles? She looked at the little slip bearing her sister's address and wondered. She gazed at the green landscape, now passing in a swift review, until her swifter thoughts replaced its impression with vague conjectures of what Chicago might be.

When a girl leaves her home at eighteen, she does one of two things. Either she falls into saving hands and becomes better, or she rapidly assumes the cosmopolitan standard of virtue and becomes worse. Of an intermediate balance, under the circumstances, there is no possibility. The city has its cunning wiles, no less than the infinitely smaller and more human tempter. There are large forces which allure with all the soulfulness of expression possible in the most cultured human. The gleam of a thousand lights is often as effective as the persuasive light in a wooing and fascinating eye. Half the undoing of the unsophisticated and natural mind is

© 2002 Dreiser Studies

accomplished by forces wholly superhuman. A blare of sound, a roar of life, a vast array of human hives, appeal to the astonished senses in equivocal terms. Without a counsellor at hand to whisper cautious interpretations, what falsehoods may not these things breathe into the unguarded ear! Unrecognised for what they are, their beauty, like music, too often relaxes, then weakens, then perverts the simpler human perceptions. (*Sister Carrie*. New York: Doubleday, Page, 1900. 1–2.)

THE 1981 PENNSYLVANIA EDITION:

CHAPTER I

When Caroline Meeber boarded the afternoon train for Chicago her total outfit consisted of a small trunk, which was checked in the baggage car, a cheap imitation alligator skin satchel holding some minor details of the toilet, a small lunch in a paper box and a yellow leather snap purse, containing her ticket, a scrap of paper with her sister's address in Van Buren Street, and four dollars in money. It was in August, 1889. She was eighteen years of age, bright, timid and full of the illusions of ignorance and youth. Whatever touch of regret at parting characterized her thoughts it was certainly not for advantages now being given up. A gush of tears at her mother's farewell kiss, a touch in the throat when the cars clacked by the flour mill where her father worked by the day, a pathetic sigh as the familiar green environs of the village passed in review, and the threads which bound her so lightly to girlhood and home were irretrievably broken.

To be sure she was not conscious of any of this. Any change, however great, might be remedied. There was always the next station where one might descend and return. There was the great city, bound more closely by these very trains which came up daily. Columbia City was not so very far away, even once she was in Chicago. What pray is a few hours—a hundred miles? She could go back. And then her sister was there. She looked at the little slip bearing the latter's address and wondered. She gazed at the green landscape now passing in swift review until her swifter thoughts replaced its impression with vague conjectures of what Chicago might be. Since infancy her ears had been full of its fame. Once the family had thought of moving there. If she secured good employment they might come now. Anyhow it was vast. There were lights and sounds and a roar of things. People were rich. There were vast depots. This onrushing train was merely speeding to get there.

When a girl leaves her home at eighteen, she does one of two things. Either she falls into saving hands and becomes better, or she rapidly assumes the cosmopolitan standard of virtue and becomes worse. Of an intermediate balance, under the circumstances, there is no possibility. The city has its cunning wiles no less than the infinitely smaller and more human tempter. There are large forces which allure,

with all the soulfulness of expression possible in the most cultured human. The gleam of a thousand lights is often as effective, to all moral intents and purposes, as the persuasive light in a wooing and fascinating eye. Half the undoing of the unsophisticated and natural mind is accomplished by forces wholly superhuman. A blare of sound, a roar of life, a vast array of human hives appeal to the astonished senses in equivocal terms. Without a counselor at hand to whisper cautious interpretations, what falsehoods may not these things breathe into the unguarded ear! Unrecognized for what they are, their beauty, like music, too often relaxes, then weakens, then perverts the simplest human perceptions. (*Sister Carrie*. Ed. James L. W. West III, et al. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1981. 3–4.)

THE 1953 GERMAN TRANSLATION OF THE 1900 EDITION:

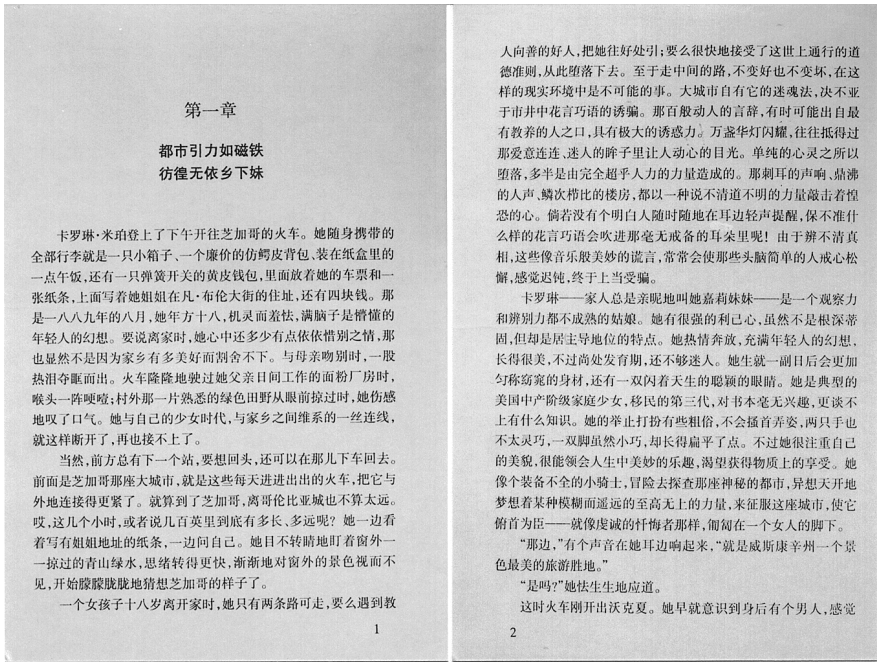
Als Caroline Meeber in den Nachmittagszug nach Chicago einstieg, bestand ihr ganzes Gepäck aus einem Köfferchen, einer Handtasche aus billigem, imitiertem Krokodilleder, einem bescheidenen Frühstück in einer Pappschachtel und der gelben Lederbörse, die ihre Bahnkarte, einen Papierstreifen mit der Anschrift ihrer Schwester, van Burenstraße, und vier Dollar enthielt. Es war im August 1889. Carrie war achtzehn Jahre alt, aufgeweckt, schüchtern, von den Traumbildern der Unwissenheit und Jugend erfüllt. Hatte sie beim Abschied irgendwie Schmerzliches empfunden, so gewiß nicht um der Vorteile willen, die sie aufgeben mußte. Als die Mutter sie zum Abschied küßte, schluchzte sie; es würgte sie im Hals, als sie an der Mühle vorbeifuhr, wo ihr Vater im Taglohn arbeitete; das vertraute Grün rings um das Dorf, das sie zu letzten Mal sah, entlockte ihr einen Seufzer—und damit waren die Bande, die sie so lose mit der Mädchenzeit und ihrer Heimat verknüpften, unwiderruflich zerrissen.

Freilich gab es da noch immer die nächste Station, wo man aussteigen, umkehren konnte. Und da gab es auch die große Stadt, die durch diese täglich verkehrenden Züge doch viel näher gerückt wurde. Columbia City war nicht so sehr weit—selbst wenn Carrie sich dann in Chicago befand. Was bedeuten denn ein paar Stunden—ein paar hundert Meilen? Sie blickte auf den Papierstreifen mit der Adresse ihrer Schwester und fragte sich, wie alles werden würde. Betrachtete die grüne, rasch vorüberziehende Landschaft, bis ihre rascher fliegenden Gedanken diese Eindrücke durch unbestimmte Vorstellungen von Chicago ersetzten.

Wenn ein Mädchen ihr Heim mit achtzehn Jahren verläßt, gibt es zwei Möglichkeiten. Entweder kommt sie in gute Hände und wird besser, oder sie nimmt rasch den Tugendmaßstab der Großstadt an und wird schlechter. Keine Zwischenstufe unter solchen Umständen, die Gleichgewicht hielte. Die Stadt hat ihre schlauen Kniffe nicht weniger als der unendlich kleinere und menschlichere Versucher. Gewaltige Kräfte locken mit all der seelischen Ausdruckskraft, die den

höchstentwickelten menschlichen Wesen zu Gebote stehen. Das Schimmern von Tausenden von Lichtern ist oft ebenso wirkungsvoll wie das Aufleuchten in einem werbenden und berückenden Auge. Die unverbildeten und natürlichen Menschen werden zur Hälfte durch ganz außermenschliche Kräfte ins Unglück gestürzt. Aufrauschende Klänge, der Tumult des Lebens, die weitläufige Ansiedlung der Menschenbienen drängen sich den erstaunten Sinnen in fragwürdiger Weise auf. Ist nicht ein warnender, erklärender Berater zur Stelle—welch falsche Einflüsterungen können sich des unbewahrten Gemüts bemächtigen! Da sie nicht als das erkannt werden, was sie wirklich sind, blendet ihre Schönheit zu oft, wie Musik, zuerst die schlichtere menschliche Einsicht, macht sie dann schwach, um sie schließlich ganz zu verdrehen. (*Schwester Carrie*. Trans. Anna Nussbaum. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1953. 5–6.)

THE 1999 CHINESE TRANSLATION OF THE 1900 EDITION:



第一章

都市引力如磁铁
彷徨无依乡下妹

卡罗琳·米珀登上了下午开往芝加哥的火车。她随身携带的全部行李就是一只小箱子、一个廉价的仿鳄皮背包，装在纸盒里的一点午饭，还有一只弹簧开关的黄皮钱包，里面放着她的车票和一张纸条，上面写着她姐姐在凡·布伦大街的住址，还有四块钱。那是一八八九年的八月，她年方十八，机灵而羞怯，满脑子是憧憬的年轻人的幻想。要说离家时，她心中还多少有点依依惜别之情，那也显然不是因为家乡有多美好而割舍不下。与母亲吻别时，一股热泪夺眶而出。火车隆隆地驶过她父亲日间工作的面粉厂房时，喉头一阵哽咽；村外那一片熟悉的绿色田野从眼前掠过时，她伤感地叹了口气。她与自己的少女时代，与家乡之间维系的一丝连线，就这样断开了，再也接不上了。

当然，前方总有下一个站，要想回头，还可以在那儿下车回去。前面是芝加哥那座大城市，就是这些每天进进出出的火车，把它与外地连接得更紧了。就算到了芝加哥，离哥伦比亚城也不算太远。哎，这几个小时，或者说几百英里到底有多长、多远呢？她一边看着写有姐姐地址的纸条，一边问自己。她目不转睛地盯着窗外一一掠过的青山绿水，思绪转得更快，渐渐地对窗外的景色视而不见，开始朦朦胧胧地猜想芝加哥的样子了。

一个女孩子十八岁离开家时，她只有两条路可走，要么遇到教

1

人向善的好人，把她往好处引；要么很快地接受了这世上通行的道德准则，从此堕落下去。至于走中间的路，不变好也不变坏，在这样的现实环境中是不可能的事。大城市自有它的迷魂法，决不亚于市井中花言巧语的诱骗。那百般动人的言辞，有时可能出自最有教养的人之口，具有极大的诱惑力。万盏华灯闪耀，往往抵得过那爱意连连、迷人的眸子里让人动心的目光。单纯的心灵之所以堕落，多半是由完全超乎人力的力量造成的。那刺耳的声响、鼎沸的人声、鳞次栉比的楼房，都以一种说不清道不明的力量敲击着惶恐的心。倘若没有个明白人随时随地在耳边轻声提醒，保不准什么样的花言巧语会吹进那毫无戒备的耳朵里呢！由于辨不清真相，这些像音乐般美妙的谎言，常常会使那些头脑简单的人戒心松懈，感觉迟钝，终于上当受骗。

卡罗琳——家人总是亲昵地叫她嘉莉妹妹——是一个观察力和辨别力都不成熟的姑娘。她有很强的利己心，虽然不是根深蒂固，但却是居主导地位的特点。她热情奔放，充满年轻人的幻想，长得很美，不过尚处发育期，还不够迷人。她生就一副目后会更加匀称窈窕的身材，还有一双闪着天生的聪颖的眼睛。她是典型的美国中产阶级家庭少女，移民的第三代，对书本毫无兴趣，更谈不上有什么知识。她的举止打扮有些粗俗，不会搔首弄姿，两只手也不太灵巧，一双脚虽然小巧，却长得扁平了点。不过她很注重自己的美貌，很能领会人生中美妙的乐趣，渴望获得物质上的享受。她像个装备不全的小骑士，冒险去探查那座神秘的都市，异想天开地梦想着某种模糊而遥远的至高无上的力量，来征服这座城市，使它俯首为臣——就像虔诚的忏悔者那样，匍匐在一个女人的脚下。

"那边，"有个声音在她耳边响起来，"就是威斯康辛州一个景色最美的旅游胜地。"

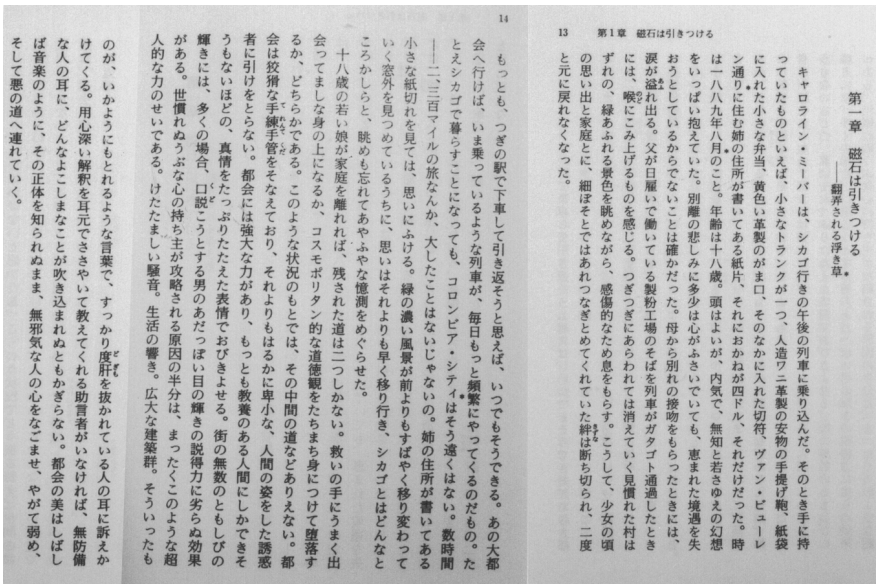
"是吗？"她怯生生地应道。

这时火车刚开出沃克夏。她早就意识到身后有个男人，感觉

2

(*Sister Carrie*. Trans. Kefei Wang. Nanjing: Yilin Press, 1999. 1–2.)

THE 1997 JAPANESE TRANSLATION OF THE 1900 EDITION:



第一章　磁石は引きつける
——翻弄される浮き草。

キャロライン・ミーバーは、シカゴ行きの午後の列車に乗り込んだ。そのとき手に持っていたものといえば、小さなトランクが一つ、人造ワニ革製の安物の手提げ鞄、紙袋に入れた小さな弁当、黄色い革製のがま口、そのなかに入れた切符、ヴァン・ビューレン通りに住む姉の住所が書いてある紙片、それにおかねが四ドル、それだけだった。時は一八八九年八月のこと。年齢は十八歳。頭はよいが、内気で、無知と若さゆえの幻想をいっぱい抱えていた。別離の悲しみに多少は心がふさいでいても、恵まれた境遇を失おうとしているからでないことは確かだった。母から別れの接吻をもらったときには、涙が溢れ出る。父が日雇いで働いている製粉工場のそばを列車がガタゴト通過したときには、喉にこみ上げるものを感じる。つぎつぎにあらわれては消えていく見慣れた村はずれの、緑あふれる景色を眺めながら、感傷的なため息をもらす。こうして、少女の頃の思い出と家庭とに、細ぼそとではあれつなぎとめてくれていた絆は断ち切られ、二度と元に戻れなくなった。

もっとも、つぎの駅で下車して引き返そうと思えば、いつでもそうできる。あの大都会へ行けば、いま乗っているような列車が、毎日もっと頻繁にやってくるのだもの。たとえシカゴで暮らすことになっても、コロンビア・シティはそう遠くはない。数時間——二、三百マイルの旅なんか、大したことはないじゃないの。姉の住所が書いてある小さな紙切れを見ては、思いにふける。緑の濃い風景が前よりもすばやく移り変わっていく窓外を見つめているうちに、思いはそれよりも早く移り行き、シカゴとはどんなところかしらと、眺めも忘れてあやふやな憶測をめぐらせた。

十八歳の若い娘が家庭を離れれば、残された道は二つしかない。救いの手にうまく出会ってましな身の上になるか、コスモポリタン的な道徳観をたちまち身につけて堕落するか、どちらかである。このような状況のもとでは、その中間の道などありえない。都会は狡猾な手練手管をそなえており、それよりもはるかに卑小な、人間の姿をした誘惑者に引けをとらない。都会には強大な力があり、もっとも教養のある人間にしかできそうもないほどの、真情をたっぷりたたえた表情でおびきよせる。街の無数のともしびの輝きには、多くの場合、口説こうとする男のあだっぽい目の輝きの説得力に劣らぬ効果がある。世慣れぬうぶな心の持ち主が攻略される原因の半分は、まったくこのような超人的な力のせいである。けたたましい騒音。生活の響き。広大な建築群。そういったものが、いかようにもとれるような言葉で、すっかり度肝を抜かれている人の耳に訴えかけてくる。用心深い解釈を耳元でささやいて教えてくれる助言者がいなければ、無防備な人の耳に、どんなよこしまなことが吹き込まれぬともかぎらない。都会の美はしばし音楽のように、その正体を知られぬまま、無邪気な人の心をなごませ、やがて弱め、そして悪の道へ連れていく。

(*Shisutaa Kyarii* [*Sister Carrie*]. 2 vols. Trans. Kiyohiko Murayama. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten [Bookshop], 1997. 13–15.)

THE 1996 FRENCH TRANSLATION OF THE 1981 EDITON:

Lorsque Caroline Meeber monta dans le train de l'après-midi en partance pour Chicago, elle avait pour tout bagage une petite malle qu'elle enregistra, un sac bon marché façon alligator contenant quelques menus accessoires de toilette, un léger repas dans une petite boîte en carton et un porte-monnaie de cuir jaune avec fermoir à pression où se trouvaient son billet, un bout de papier avec l'adresse de sa soeur dans Van Buren Street et quatre dollars en liquide. On était en août 1889. Elle avait dix-huit ans, elle était éveillée, réservée et pleine des illusions propres à l'ignorance et à la jeunesse. Si l'ombre d'un regret assombrit ses pensées au moment de la séparation, ce n'était assurément pas en raison des privilèges auxquels elle renonçait alors. Un flot de larmes lors du baiser d'adieu donné par sa mère, un serrement dans la gorge quand les voitures grincèrent sur les rails en passant devant la minoterie où son père travaillait à la journée, un soupir à fendre l'âme au fur et à mesure que les

abords du village défilaient sous ses yeux, et tous les liens qui la rattachaient de manière si ténue à son adolescence et à sa famille se brisèrent net.

De rien de cela elle n'avait, certes, conscience. Tout changement, si grand fût-il, pouvait trouver remède. Il y avait toujours la prochaine gare où l'on pouvait descendre pour revenir. Également, la grande ville s'était rapprochée, du fait de ces mêmes trains qui passaient tous les jours. Columbia City ne serait pas le bout du monde, même lorsqu'elle serait à Chicago. Dites-moi, que sont quelques heures, cent miles? Elle pourrait éventuellement rentrer. Et puis, il y avait sa soeur là-bas. Elle regardait le petit bout de papier avec l'adresse de cette dernière et elle s'interrogeait. Elle contempla le verdoyant paysage défilant maintenant, à toute allure, sous son regard, jusqu'au moment où, plus vite encore, à l'image qu'il lui renvoyait, firent place dans son esprit de vagues présomptions sur la façon dont on vivait à Chicago. Depuis sa petite enfance, on lui rabattait les oreilles de sa splendeur. Il fut un temps où sa famille envisageait de s'y installer. Si elle y trouvait une bonne situation, peut-être pourraient-ils y venir à présent? De toute façon, c'était immense là-bas. C'était plein de lumières, de bruits, de clameurs. On était riche. Il y avait des gares gigantesques. Si le train accélérait sa course, c'était pour y arriver plus vite.

Lorsqu'une jeune fille part de chez elle à 18 ans, de deux choses l'une: ou bien elle tombe entre des mains protectrices, et gagne en sagesse, ou bien, vite, elle se plie au modèle de vertu propre au cosmopolitisme et elle sombre dans le vice. De moyen terme, en pareil cas, il n'y en a point. La grande ville a ses ruses, et elles sont malignes, tout aussi malignes que celles du tentateur, de cet infiniment petit qu'est l'homme. Des forces puissantes y exercent leur pouvoir envoûtant, et bouleversent jusqu'au tréfonds de l'âme avec toute l'intensité d'émotion la créature humaine la plus cultivée. Souvent, mille lumières par leur miroitement ont, à tous égards, un effet aussi convaincant que la lueur enjôleuse animant le regard de celui qui aspire à se faire aimer. La ruine d'une âme candide et simple se consomme pour une bonne moitié sous l'action de forces bien au-delà de l'être humain. L'éclatement des sons, le grondement de la vie, l'immense déploiement de ces ruches humaines flattent les sens émerveillés de leurs discours équivoques. Sans conseiller alentour pour chuchoter à l'oreille de prudents avis, quels mensonges tout cela ne souffle-t-il pas à l'esprit non averti! Non estimé à sa juste valeur, tout cela est d'une beauté qui, telle une musique, se fait trop souvent émolliente, au point d'émousser, voire de pervertir en l'homme les plus élémentaires facultés de discernement. (*Sister Carrie*, roman. Traduit de l'américain par Jeanne-Marie Santraud. Paris: J. Losfeld, 1996. 5–6.)

Play Review
Sister Carrie at The Indiana Repertory Theatre

Adapted for the stage by Charles Smith, commissioned by the IRT. Production dates: 9 January to 2 February 2002.

Laura Raidonis Bates
Indiana State University

"Why *Sister Carrie*?"

The question in the minds of some Indianapolis theatergoers was anticipated, voiced, and emphatically answered by artistic director Janet Allen in her program notes. "Apart from the stature of the novel and its place in Hoosier fiction lore, the story, the issues, and the character of Carrie are strikingly resonant even a century after they were created. Often called a 'sociological tragedy,' the journey of the naïve, small-town Midwestern girl Carrie Meeber, as she becomes the worldly, big-city sophisticate Carrie Madenda, affords the reader—or audience member—a roller-coaster ride through American values and mores" (Allen 35).

Translating a four-hundred-page nineteenth-century novel to a two-hour contemporary stage production is a daunting task. (I know; I've done it myself with Dostoeyvsky's *Crime and Punishment*.) The Indiana Repertory Theatre is to be commended for its choice of text—and Chicago playwright Charles Smith is to be congratulated for his ability to create lively, vivid dramatic action without sacrificing Dreiser's content and tone. In fact, the three-act play ran well over the typical "two hours' traffic on the stage," but the audience that remained for the post-show discussion on the evening that I attended echoed my own observation that the action was well-paced throughout, with engaging stage pictures that were constantly shifting focus from one overlapping scene to the next.

Influenced by the twentieth-century media of television and film and the camera's ability to "cut" from scene to scene, contemporary playwrights

© 2002 Dreiser Studies

Carrie first meets Hurstwood. Rob Breckenridge as Charles Drouet, Emma Bowers as Carrie Meeber, and Craig Spidle as George Hurstwood in *Sister Carrie*. IRT photo.

tend to write plays with many short scenes that flow together. While Ibsen's plays may have a single setting, and Chekhov's might have a set for each act, today's writers may have ten to twenty scenes, at different locations, in a single act. Compare that to *Sister Carrie,* which has 90 scenes! A rolling platform, multiple playing levels, and minimal set pieces facilitated fluid scene changes. Furthermore, stage designer Linda Buchanan notes that author Charles Smith "embraces the theatrical conventions of time and space, as when [he] allows Carrie, simply by addressing two different people from different parts of her life, to exist in two places at once. This unique aspect of theatre as an art form is what is most exciting . . . about it" (Buchanan 39).

Additionally challenging, from a production aspect, were the hundreds of costume elements required for this lavish production. Costume designer Merrily Murray-Walsh observes that "[a]lthough recreating an accurate historical stage picture is certainly one of the challenges of *Sister Carrie*, helping the audience catalog the myriad and fast-paced introduction of charac-

ters is perhaps my foremost goal. Most of the actors play a long list of different persons in the story. The trick is to create an instantly recognizable look for each character without excessive actual changes of costume" (Murray-Walsh 38). For example, the actor who played Sven also played Shannon, Shaughnessy, and assorted ensemble roles. The actress who played Minnie also played Drouet's housemaid, Lola Osborne, and assorted ensemble roles. Twenty-eight speaking parts and numberless ensemble roles were played by a versatile cast of twelve, with only the actors playing the roles of Carrie, Hurstwood, and Drouet *not* assigned multiple roles.

"The character of Carrie herself offers quite the opposite challenge," Murray-Walsh continues. "Her metamorphosis from a naïve young country girl to a star of the New York stage needs to be slowly and clearly portrayed by her many changes in costume over the length of the play" (38). Subtle costume transitions also underscored the contrasting shift in social status of the two main characters: Carrie's rise and Hurstwood's demise.

Emma Bowers made her debut at the IRT in the role of Carrie, deftly handling the transition from naïve girl to worldly woman, while retaining to the end of the play a telling hint of the wide-eyed and breathy quality of the former. Rob Breckenridge played the role of Charles Drouet with the charm and ease implicit in that character's demeanor. Craig Spidle, who played George Hurstwood, compared his role to Shakespeare's King Lear—in terms of the magnitude of the character's dramatic "journey."

Crowd scenes were effectively employed, whether setting the tone for the busy train depot in the opening scene of Carrie's departure, or the impersonality of big city Chicago as she walked the streets searching for her first job. In Act Two, the ensemble was allowed an especially effective scene-stealing moment: despite Dreiser's narrative description of a relatively empty train to which Hurstwood has kidnapped Carrie—"No one saw this little altercation, for very few persons were in the car, and they were attempting to doze" (Dreiser 198)—onstage, a crowd departed the train as Carrie said to Hurstwood, in a moment that signals her acquiescence, "Will you let me come back if I want to?" In choreographed unison, the commuters turned to indicate nonverbal skepticism of Hurstwood's reply: "Of course, you know I will" (Dreiser 201).

Dreiser himself apparently recognized the need to revise Chapter 46, in which the third influential male figure in Carrie's life, Bob Ames, receives an unjustifiable rejection ("Strange Adventures" 12). After all, his suggestion that Carrie abandon comedy for "serious drama" is accepted even when he himself is not: "I think I can do better in a serious play," Carrie tells Lola

Carrie and Hurstwood's first kiss. Craig Spidle as George Hurstwood and Emma Bowers as Carrie Meeber in *Sister Carrie*. IRT photo.

soon after dismissing him. But when Lola asks, "What put that idea in your head?" Carrie replies, "Oh, nothing" (Dreiser 357).

In 1963, critic Shelden Grebstein called Carrie a "Victorian vamp": an "essentially Victorian heroine who comes very close to the stereotyped heroine of popular melodrama, but who is at the same time the first truly modern heroine in American fiction because her behavior operates within the sphere of naturalistic and iconoclastic pragmatism rather than Victorian moral dogmatism" (544).

Whether or not Dreiser saw Carrie as a prototypical feminist, the IRT production directed by Andrew Tsao certainly did. Her ability to take materially from her men and discard them without emotional cost is underscored by the staging that avoids any physical contact with any of her male lovers. In pointed contrast is the physical intimacy that is a constant part of her friendship with Lola, so pointed that it prompted questions about lesbianism during the post-show discussion.

Indeed, Dreiser's novel seems not only to celebrate the rise of strong female characters, but also to despise the fall of weak men: "How sheepish

men look when they fall down," says Lola, observing the literally fallen Hurstwood in the snow as she and Carrie brush past him to rise, literally, to their penthouse suite (Dreiser 364).

"Even while we can disapprove of Carrie's actions (or lack thereof), Dreiser is careful that we never fall out of sympathy with her," concludes Janet Allen. "He sets a veritable war aflame between our intellects and our emotions as we empathize with her even as we may judge her immoral. This dichotomy makes for very vigorous theatre and makes Carrie a very enticing, romantic, even tragic heroine whose impact remains undiminished 100 years later" (Allen 35).

Given the changes to the story—notably the suggestion of lesbianism implicit in the portrayal of Carrie—hard-core Dreiser fans might find reason to object to this production. A colleague of mine, for example, felt Carrie's character was "simplified" to one who wanted wealth and fame and was happy at the end because she had achieved them. This impression was underscored, he felt, by the staging of Dreiser's closing comments *about* Carrie—which were spoken *by* Carrie as dialogue in a play in which she was performing.

Undoubtedly, such purists might prefer the more faithful 1991 adaptation produced by the People's Light & Theatre Company in Malverne, Pennsylvania. In a review published in *Dreiser Studies* (Fall 1991), Leonard Cassuto declared the production "a treat not only for Dreiserians of all stripes, but for anyone who is willing to commit to its seven-hour length" (26). But I would argue that only Dreiserians would be willing to make such a commitment.

On the contrary, the Indiana Repertory Theatre has done an admirable job of introducing Dreiser's novel to a wholly new audience. The post-show discussion made that clear: the audience that was being exposed to the novel in this venue—and who was "willing to commit" the time to a post-show discussion—was not dominantly Dreiserian. I confess that I myself am in that category. I was invited to review this production not as a Dreiser scholar but as a theatre scholar and a playwright specializing in adaptations of literary works—and also as an avid theatregoer. During my two years as theatre editor for *Chicago Magazine* I witnessed well over 500 productions, so I know good theatre when I see it—and I saw it at IRT.

To create viable theatre from a formidable literary work is in itself an achievement. To introduce Dreiser to a new audience is another. IRT has succeeded on both counts.

Works Cited

Allen, Janet. "From the Artistic Director." *Sister Carrie* (program notes): 35.
Buchanan, Linda. "Designers' Notes." *Sister Carrie* (program notes): 39.
Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. Ed. Donald Pizer. New York: Norton, 1970.
Grebstein, Sheldon N. "Dreiser's Victorian Vamp." *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 4 (Spring 1963): 3–12.
Murray-Walsh, Merrily. "Designer's Notes." *Sister Carrie* (program notes): 38.
"Strange Adventures of Authorship." *Bookman* 15 (March 1902): 11–12.

Reviews

Sister Carrie, by Richard Lehan. Gale Study Guides to Great Literature: Literary Masterpieces vol. 7. Detroit: Gale Group, 2001. 184 pp. Cloth, $55.

Gale Study Guides are targeted at a different audience—undergraduates, and perhaps some graduate students—from those of volumes usually reviewed in this space. Their aim is, in the words of series editor George Garrett, to help the reader "experience, as fully and deeply as [one] can, a masterpiece of literature" (xi). Given both this high ambition and the diversity of its intended audience, Richard Lehan's book firmly establishes, explicates, and contextualizes Dreiser's first novel as it deserves: as a masterpiece.

As educators, I think we would all like our students to be able to locate and use criticism which will promote, rather than supplant or obscure, their own thinking about literature. Study guides (I am here thinking of Cliff's Notes and the newly emergent Spark Notes), however, are subject to all manner of perversion by their users. And though Lehan could hardly perversion-proof his volume, he has ensured that any good-faith user will be amply rewarded. The volume has two substantial cores: first is a chapter-by-chapter summary of the 1900 *Sister Carrie* text; second is a selection of excerpts from the past century of criticism, beginning with Stuart P. Sherman in 1915 and ending with Donald Pizer in the 1990s. Together these take about half the volume's available space. As for the summary, one cannot fault it—it is the most detailed I am aware of—unless to point out Lehan's unintended implication that Hurstwood makes a premeditated decision to steal the money from Fitzgerald and Moy's safe far in advance of getting the opportunity (38); however, only a student who had read the novel carelessly or not at all would mistake Lehan's claim. The selection of critical material is, of course, drawn from a body of work intended for a

© 2002 Dreiser Studies

professional readership and will prove challenging to first-time readers. Conspicuously absent from the critical survey that includes excerpts from such critics as Pizer, Philip Fisher, Robert Penn Warren, Ellen Moers, C. C. Walcutt, and Eliseo Vivas are Philip Gerber and Lawrence Hussman. Both have written such clear explications of Dreiser's novel that Lehan's intended audience would undoubtedly have benefited from their inclusion (though their works *are* listed in the Bibliography). In contrast, Walter Benn Michaels, whose theoretical stock remains high, rates several pages not likely to remunerate novice readers.

The volume's other features include a chronology of Dreiser's life, followed by a short biographical chapter (readers may recall that Lehan's important 1969 work, *Theodore Dreiser: His World and His Novels*, was a successful and still seminal link between the author's fiction and biography). A publication history follows, which left me with two questions. I believe the intended audience would naturally like a legal explanation of why Dreiser would have the power to hold his publishers, Doubleday and Page, to a verbal agreement in the face of their attempt to back out. Some of the relevant correspondence is reproduced (Lehan's volume has extensive marginal illustrations, a valuable feature), but Dreiser's letter "insist[ing] on publication" (18) does not seem forceful enough to get a novel into print over real objections, especially considering that this was the same literary marketplace that saw the notorious suppression of *The "Genius"* only fifteen years later. I also wondered how much sense Lehan's brief argument against the Pennsylvania Edition, which relies on terms like "copy text" and "final intentions" (18–19), would make to undergraduates uninitiated in the parlance of textual studies.

Lehan is adept at providing coherent cultural and literary contexts for *Sister Carrie*. The influence of Balzac and Spencer is illuminated, for example, as well as three historical "trends": Darwinism and Social Darwinism, high industrialization, and the growth of cities. Nor does Lehan fail to employ clearly designated, formalist reading strategies for plot, setting, point-of-view, and character. I am a bit hesitant about Lehan's assertion that Dreiser narrates in an unfiltered "voice-over" (77); I can see little benefit to students in this old notion that some writers maintain little or no dramatic control over and distance from their narrators. This quibble aside, there are many useful insights in these sections: for example, the calculations on how much Carrie's $4.50 per week shoe factory job, and the $20 Drouet "loans" her, would be worth in today's dollars (74); the demonstration that Dreiser's plot operates according to a "mechanistic . . . causal sequence" in which no single set of events can be reversed (77); and the intriguing proposal that

"Dreiser believed that chance was only another name for people's ignorance of causes" (78).

Lehan concludes with several pages of thought-provoking study questions, any number of which could be turned into fruitful classroom discussion by educators. But not before he revisits one of the features which made *Theodore Dreiser: His World and His Novels* so worthwhile. A section on Balzac, Norris, and Zola, immediately followed by one on "Dreiser's Contemporaries"—including Dos Passos, Howells, Crane, Wharton, London, and Wells (James having been extensively covered elsewhere in the book)—should inspire students in the art of intertextual interpretation. Some of this is reworked from Lehan's 1969 critical book, to good effect; the only disappointments are a dearth of material on Twain this time around (whose *Huckleberry Finn* makes interesting comparative study as realism and has surely penetrated curriculums to a greater extent than Wharton's *The Custom of the Country* or London's *The Iron Heel*), and the fact that his discussion of Crane is a bit brief and seemingly dismissive.

Finally, the volume includes glossaries of literary and cultural names and terms; people, places, and terms in *Sister Carrie* (with page citations); and a primary and secondary bibliography with important critical works annotated.

—Shawn St. Jean, SUNY College at Brockport

Pagan Dreiser: Songs from American Mythology, by Shawn St. Jean. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2001. 235 pp. Cloth, $42.50.

Intertextuality is the key to *Pagan Dreiser*. Shawn St. Jean argues that Dreiser's debt to ancient Hellenism was so profound that an adequate appraisal of his work requires an understanding of what the author identifies as "paganism." In the "Introduction," St. Jean states his threefold purpose:

> first, to explicate Dreiser's passing allusions in his novels to Greek myth and literature; second, to explore some of his less obvious but more important structural, conceptual, and philosophical debts to the Greeks; third, to elucidate how this 'pagan' point of view helps to untangle many of the traditional knotty problems of Dreiser scholarship.

St. Jean reads Dreiser intertextually in the sense that, as he claims, every major work from *Sister Carrie* to *The Bulwark* is influenced by classical Hellenic texts or by pagan paradigms.

Before assessing this thesis, I think we should try to clarify the pivotal, problematic term: paganism. In the following paragraphs, I have proffered a series of four definitions of this highly elusive concept.

1. Paganism is a varied and widespread polytheistic system of belief in which various deities are worshipped in rites according to their specific domains—love, war, home, etc. Its practices typically involve prophecy, witchcraft, magic, and a belief in fate and supernatural intervention. Paganism was the religion of ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt. The principal pre-Christian religions of Europe (Celtic, Germanic, and Norse), as well as the indigenous religions of Africa, Australia, the Western Hemisphere, parts of Asia, and the Pacific Islands may be considered pagan.

2. In many—perhaps most—expressions, pagans experience a simple, yet strong dependence on natural processes. Pagan rituals are often seasonal events that venerate and entreat the gods who rule such phenomena as storms, floods, droughts, propagation, and harvesting. The spiritual life of pagans—and many are devoutly spiritual—is intensely earthy and somatic. The spirituality of the typical pagan woman may be centered on menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, and motherhood. Intellectualism, with its detachment from nature, is alien to the pagan sensibility. Pagans live close to the soil, to water, to flora and fauna. There are no pagan theologies, no pagan missionaries, no pagan excommunications, and no pagan religious wars. In this sense the abstemious Henry David Thoreau was a modern pagan.

3. Another meaning of *paganism*, especially when it is predicated to the ancient Greeks and Romans, encompasses the entire culture: its arts, philosophies, literature, legends, and myths. In this sense the adjectives, *pagan* and *classic*, are virtually interchangeable. Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Oresteia*, the *Metamorphoses*, Achilles, Agamemnon, Circe, Aphrodite, Diana—these and more may be aspects or signifiers of paganism.

4. Still another and more general meaning of *pagan* is almost synonymous with *heathen*. This pagan is amoral, irreligious, satyric, and iconoclastic. In this sense paganism is characterized by lust, uninhibited sensuality, licentiousness, or sexual freedom. Obviously, this libidinous meaning of *paganism* has almost no historical basis in the religious practices described above; it is simply a modern epithet, either pejorative or approbative, for a certain kind of sexual behavior.

This brings me to the fundamental problem in St. Jean's book: the absence or impossibility of a useful definition. The range of these meanings of *pagan* (1 through 4) in *Pagan Dreiser* is stretched into far-reaching and

contradictory areas—so far indeed that the concept of paganism loses much of its potential as an interpretative instrument. Dreiser was himself somewhat responsible for this problem, for it was he who first muddied the waters. "Pagan" was one of Dreiser's favorite words, but he never adequately clarified his meaning. In *The "Genius,"* Eugene Witla, that unrelenting sexual adventurer, is "pagan to the core" (*vide* 4). In *An American Tragedy* when the young Clyde Griffiths awakens to sexual desire, he feels that he "must have a pagan girl of his own . . ."—that is, a girl who will satisfy his sexual needs (*vide* 4). But when Dreiser describes his mother, Sarah Schänäb Dreiser, she also is "pagan" (*vide* 2). In this sense, she was, for her son, a "strange, sweet, dreaming woman" who had "little moral and social sophistication." Clearly, these two meanings of "pagan" are difficult to harmonize. Throughout this book St. Jean treats paganism as if it is a single, clear concept and thus conflates the different and distinct meanings. Seeming to acknowledge this confusion St. Jean often surrounds the key term with quotation marks as if to call attention to the ambiguity of the term.

This is not to say that *Pagan Dreiser* is without merit. Far from it. The book, in fact, is meticulously researched and documented, and it abounds in fresh insight. In four chapters, St. Jean revisits the problem of Dreiser's naturalism, his social philosophy, his beliefs about sex and gender roles, and his contribution to the creation of an American mythos. In the first three chapters, St. Jean reads Dreiser through Hellenic lenses; towards the end, he sets the Greeks aside in order to develop Dreiser's mythic relationship to Emerson, Whitman, Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, and Stephen Crane.

In his discussion of Dreiser's naturalism, St. Jean downplays the influence of Zola and other French novelists and English philosophers like Herbert Spencer. Instead, he suggests the influence of Aristotelian concepts such as *hubris*, *moira*, *ananke*, *hamartia*, and *peripeteia*. But do we know, in fact, that Dreiser knew Aristotle's *Poetics*? And, more importantly, do we know what effect it may have had on him? At one dubious place in this book, St. Jean parallels Hurstwood's seduction of Carrie with Aegisthus's seduction of Clytemestra. This, of course, would cast Drouet in the role of Agamemnon! It is also impossible—should anyone wonder?—to see Carrie as Clytemestra!

In his chapter on Dreiser as a social critic, St. Jean appeals to classical models. *Jennie Gerhardt*, the discussion of which is one of St. Jean's best sub-chapters, is a study of the classical *oikos*, family. Jennie, whose name resonates with Iphigenia, is sacrificed "under the guise of religious piety." The multiple deaths in the novel dramatize, through the Hellenic vision, the disintegration of the basic familial structures.

For me one of the least successful parts of *Pagan Dreiser* is the discussion of *Sister Carrie* in the context of Hesiod's *Works and Days*. The classical analogues seem strained, and even when they work, they seem, at best, decorative flourishes on a modern cityscape.

Chapter 2 concludes with an inventive deconstructive analysis of *An American Tragedy*. Originally presented to the American Literature Association in 1996 and published in *Dreiser Studies* 28.1 (1997): 3–24, this newly conceptualized and revised discussion focuses on the account of Roberta's drowning. The narrative claims that as the rowboat capsizes, the left wale strikes her on the head. St. Jean demonstrates that this is impossible and argues that, therefore, the narrative is deeply flawed, and that, furthermore, this inconsistency deconstructs "both fate and free will," leaving the reader of the novel in a hopeless quandary. Fascinating as it is, this analysis will probably not attract many readers, and finally, it really has nothing to do with "paganism."

In Chapter 3, the main and most enduring contribution to our understanding of Dreiser and of *Pagan Dreiser* is St. Jean's discussion of *The "Genius."* Like the piece on *An American Tragedy*, a version of this chapter was also published in *Dreiser Studies* 29 (1998): 34–50. St. Jean demonstrates that *The "Genius,"* in the entire corpus of Dreiser's work, most abounds with classical allusions: Sappho, Zeus, Hylas, Adonis, Perseus, Cupid, Diana, Adonis, and more. Here, like Joyce, Dreiser seems to have written a modern novel that parallels ancient texts.

In the final chapter, St. Jean offers an extended and detailed defense of *The Bulwark* as Dreiser's final solution to "pagan" issues. In Solon Barnes, Dreiser presents a character who begins in naïve faith, falls from grace, and rises to a new, mature faith in God's presence in all aspects of life.

Pagan Dreiser is an uneven book, yet it has many insights that may be delved by Dreiser scholars for many years.

—John Clendenning, California State University, Northridge

News & Notes

The Library of America will publish *An American Tragedy*, edited by **Thomas P. Riggio**, as its second Dreiser volume. The projected publication date is January 2003.

After serving as the Dreiser Society's Secretary-Treasurer since 1993, **Paul Orlov** has stepped down, effective June 1, 2002. **Donna Packer-Kinlaw** has agreed to serve as the new Secretary-Treasurer, and all correspondence regarding the Society and payment of dues should henceforth be addressed to her at the Department of English, University of Maryland, 3101 Susquehanna Hall, College Park, MD 20742. Email: sndkinlaw@yahoo.com

Effective also on June 1, **Clare Eby** succeeds Tom Riggio as President of the Dreiser Society. Eby can be reached at the Department of English, University of Connecticut at Hartford, 85 Lawler Rd., West Hartford, CT 06117. Email: eby@uconnvm.uconn.edu

BACK ISSUE SALE: To clear out surplus stock and to encourage Dreiser scholarship, we are pleased to make *complete* sets of *Dreiser Studies*, through vol. 31 (Fall 2000), available for only $35, plus postage. This is about 10% of the normal price—for the 62 issues, one would normally pay $5 per issue (or $310). Here's your opportunity to own all copies of the *Dreiser Newsletter* and *Dreiser Studies*, through 2000, while supplies last.

Postage rates:		
Media mail:	$5.00	**total**: $40.00
Priority mail:	$12.00	**total**: $47.00

To order, send a check made payable to *Dreiser Studies* (address inside cover). For subscribers outside the USA, please email Keith Newlin at newlink@uncwil.edu for the appropriate postage rate. Please also check to see if your library has a complete run, for this is an inexpensive way to build its collection.

Contributors

Renate von Bardeleben is a professor of American Literature and Language at Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, School of Applied Linguistics and Cultural Studies in Germersheim. She is the author of *Das Bild New Yorks im Erzählwerk von Dreiser und Dos Passos* (1967) and *Studien zur amerikanischen Autobiographie: Benjamin Franklin und Mark Twain* (1981). Among her editions are three festschrifts, two volumes of conference proceedings on the Hispanic cultures in the United States, and two conference volumes on Women's/Gender Studies. Besides work on travel writing and ethnic literature she has published numerous articles on Dreiser and is now finishing a new unabridged edition of *A Traveler at Forty*.

Laura Raidonis Bates is an assistant professor of English at Indiana State University and a playwright with plays produced in the United States and Europe. She has a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of Chicago.

John Clendenning teaches at California State University, Northridge. His review of Bill Brown, *The Material Unsconscious*, and George Monteiro, *Stephen Crane's Blue Badge of Courage*, will appear in a forthcoming issue of *American Literature*.

Yoshinobu Hakutani, Distinguished Professor of English at Kent State University, is the author or editor of several recent books, including *Richard Wright and Racial Discourse* (1996), *Haiku: This Other World*, by Richard Wright (1998), *Theodore Dreiser and American Culture* (2000), *Art, Music, and Literature, 1897–1902*, by Theodore Dreiser (2001), *Modernity in East-West Literary Criticism* (2001), and *Postmodernity and Cross-Culturalism* (2002).

Daochao Jiang is an associate professor of English at Teacher's College, Shenzhen University, China. He is the author of *Dreiser* (Sichuan People's Press, 2001) and has published numerous articles on modern American literature in key journals in China. Currently he is working on a book about

Dreiser's novels, which will be published by Shanghai Foreign Language Teaching Press.

Kiyohiko Murayama is a professor of English at Tokyo Metropolitan University. His publications include book chapters and articles in *Dreiser Studies* and *CLA Journal*, in addition to many other writings in Japanese. The latter include *A Study of Theodore Dreiser: America and the Tragedy*, a winner of the 1988 Japan-US Friendship Commission American Studies Book Award, and book chapters, articles, and editions about Mark Twain, 1930s literature, Dreiser, and critical theory. His current interests are in travel literature and James Fenimore Cooper.

Yolanda Astarita Patterson teaches in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at California State University, Hayward. She has served as President of the International Simone de Beauvoir Society since 1983 and to date has edited seventeen volumes of the annual journal, *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*. She is the author of *Simone de Beauvoir and the Demystification of Motherhood* as well as numerous articles in scholarly journals. In 1997 she was named Officier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the French government for her contributions to the spread of French culture. Since 1990 she has been a co-organizer and faculty member in a summer program in Paris designed for Americans.

Emily Rosenbaum is a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research focuses on the changing role of the theater and audiences in American literature.

Shawn St. Jean teaches world and American literature at the State University of New York, College at Brockport. He is the author of *Pagan Dreiser: Songs from American Mythology* (2001), an exploration of 19th and 20th century literary reconstruction of myth and paganism. He has published articles on literature and film in *Midwest Quarterly*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Studies in Bibliography*, *James Joyce Quarterly*, *Feminist Studies*, and others.